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# ISRAEL AND HER NEIGHBOURS

## *A Short Historical Geography*

Wherever you walk in the Land of the Bible, you tread on history. This book, written for the general reader, throws fresh light on the past and present of the Land of the Bible, the world's most historical country.

The author writes in non-technical language about the amazing finds that have been made in recent years, such as the burial chambers in Jericho which date back 4000 years, and miraculously reveal a picture of the social life of the people before the coming of the Hebrews; the potsherds from a fortress in the Judean hills which date from the time of the Prophet Jeremiah, and are inscribed in ink with the story of Nebuchadnezzar's invasion of the Kingdom of Judah. They add a new chapter to the Bible story.

He describes the catacombs in the hills of Galilee near Nazareth, which stretch for miles and are rich in inscriptions from the first centuries of our era in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin; and finally the Dead Sea Scrolls of biblical and post-biblical books, which by a miraculous chance were lighted on by Bedouin Arab shepherds and, having now been interpreted by the scholars, open new and fascinating vistas of knowledge of the Jews and the early Christians.

The other part of the book describes the extraordinary development of the land on both sides of Jordan by the Jews and the Arabs during the thirty years of the British Mandate and the seven years of the State of Israel. Mr. Bentwich guides the reader from Dan to Beersheba and beyond, to the Red Sea. He shows the sensational progress which has been made in the towns and in the country; how Tel-Aviv has grown out of waste sandhills to a city of over 300,000 inhabitants, and how the arid desert of the Negev has been restored to cultivation and a source of mineral wealth.



NORMAN BENTWICH

*has also written*

Israel

Jewish Youth comes Home



#### DEAD SEA SCROLL

Fragment of Dead Sea Scroll recovered in 1947 by Bedu shepherds. The roll contains Hebrew Psalms not included in the Bible and dating from the second century B.C. (See Ch. XI)



For  
descrip-  
tion of  
map see  
under  
List of  
Illustra-  
tions,  
page 9

# ISRAEL AND HER NEIGHBOURS

*A Short Historical Geography*

by

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*With 28 Illustrations*



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I have to thank the Royal Geographical Society for the permit to use the map of Palestine, which was originally prepared for a lecture to the Society.

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\* The dotted line on the frontispiece map marks the frontier between Israel and the Arab States: Syria, the Lebanon, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Egypt.

In the north, the frontier runs along the eastern shores of Lakes Huleh and Tiberias; then follows the east bank of the Jordan to a point south of Baisan. There, it makes a bulge to the west to enclose the quadrilateral of Samaria and Judaea, with the towns of Jenin, Tulkarm, Nablus, half Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron. A corridor of Israel territory connects with outer Jerusalem, the Jewish city. The frontier line passes south of Hebron eastwards to the Dead Sea, and then southwards across the Sea and the Hazrava plain to the eastern shore of the Gulf of Akaba.

The frontier with Egypt starts on the Mediterranean coast south of Ascalon, and runs near the sea beyond Gaza. It then turns east at right-angles by the border of Sinai to the Gulf of Akaba.

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## FOREWORD

PALESTINE today is a geographical, and not a political, unit. Politically the country, which we knew as Palestine under British Mandatory Government from 1920 to 1948, has been divided into two States: the Republic of Israel and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Yet we still use the name in common parlance to describe the country of the Bible. And I have frequently referred to the Land of Israel as Palestine. It is the most historical region of the world; and its present is as full of incident and development as its past. Nowhere in the world are more remarkable changes and experiments taking place. I have been concerned to relate the land of the Bible and the history of the Children of Israel in antiquity to the land and history of Israel and the Arabs in our own day; to set the rebirth of the nation in its historical environment.

The book has nothing to do with the present unhappy political relations of Israel to her Arab neighbours. Its purpose is to give the historical and geographical background of those States. After an introductory chapter about the geography the first part of the book briefly surveys the history of the country and of the two peoples who today share it. The second part contains sketches of the historical geography of towns, areas and regions of Palestine. I have described different sections of the land in relation to their history, from personal knowledge and from the records of the archaeologists, showing the development of civilization.

"Bitter constraint" has prevented me during the last fifteen years from visiting the country across the Jordan, and even the beloved old city of Jerusalem. I cannot then describe the recent development of that region and that town from my own observation. I realize, too, that several statements in the book, which was written in 1953, already need amendment. So much happens each year in the present, and so much is discovered each year of the past, of Israel.





## TABLE OF EVENTS AND DATES IN THE HISTORY OF PALESTINE

<i>Approx.</i> B.C.	
8000-6000	First agricultural civilization of Cave-dwellers.
4000	First city of Jericho.
2500	Semitic invasion of the Amorites.
1800	Canaanite settlement in Palestine.
1700	The Patriarch Abraham comes to Palestine.
1500-1300	Egyptian invasions and occupation of Palestine and Syria.
1450	Israel's exodus from Egypt.
1400	Joshua and the Children of Israel conquer Palestine.
1400-1100	Philistine invasions of Palestine coast.
1000	David captures Jerusalem from the Jebusites.
950	King Solomon builds the Temple of Jerusalem.
930	Division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah.
880	Building of Samaria by King Omri.
727-609	Hezekiah, King of Judah.
722	Assyrians capture Samaria; captivity of Israel.
597	Babylonians sack Jerusalem; captivity of Judah.
538	King Cyrus of Persia authorizes Jewish restoration to Judea.
516	The Jews rebuild Temple of Jerusalem.
330	Alexander the Great conquers the Persian Empire, and Palestine comes under Greek rule.
180-100	Wars of the Maccabees against the Seleucid Empire. Judea becomes sovereign State.
60	The Romans invade Palestine and establish province of Syria.
40-4	Herod of Idumæa is King of Judea.
30-20	Herod builds Third Temple of Jerusalem.
4	Judea becomes Roman province.



*Approx.*

A.D.

- 66 to 70 Wars of the Jews against the Romans. Temple destroyed by Titus.
- 300 Roman Empire adopts Christianity as State religion.
- 395 Palestine passes to the Eastern (Byzantine) part of the Roman Empire.
- 622 Flight of Mohamed from Mecca to Medina; beginning of the Moslem era.
- 636 Battle of the Yarmuk. Palestine conquered by the Arabs.
- 642 The Arabs conquer Egypt.
- 650-750 Omayyad Caliphs rule Arab Empire from Damascus.
- 1070 The Seljuk Turks conquer Syria and Palestine.
- 1094 Peter the Hermit calls on the Christian Princes to recover the Holy Land.
- 1100 The Crusaders capture Jerusalem and establish Latin Kingdom.
- 1187 Saladin recaptures Jerusalem for the Moslems.
- 1260 Mongol invasion of Palestine.
- 1291 Crusaders expelled from Palestine.
- 1492 Jews expelled from Spain; many take refuge in Palestine.
- 1500 Ottoman Turks conquer the Arab Empire.
- 1581 Queen Elizabeth grants Charter to the Levant Company.
- 1797-1798 Napoleon Bonaparte invades Egypt and Palestine.
- 1811 Mohammed Ali, Turkish Viceroy in Egypt, recovers the Holy Cities of Arabia for the Ottoman Sultan.
- 1832 Mohammed Ali captures Acre and occupies Palestine and Syria.
- 1838 British Consulate established in Jerusalem.
- 1840 Mohammed Ali compelled by the British and the Russians to abandon Palestine and Syria.

*Approx.*  
A.D.

- 1854-1856 Crimean War between England and France against Russia.
- 1860 French expedition to the Lebanon to help the Christian Maronites against the Druzes.
- 1864 Palestine Exploration Fund founded.
- 1866 Syrian Protestant College established by Americans in Beirut (Syria).
- 1870 Jewish agricultural school established outside Jaffa.
- 1880-1883 First Jewish agricultural 'colonies' planted in Palestine.
- 1895 Theodore Herzl publishes *The Jews' State*.
- 1897 First Zionist Congress held in Basle.
- 1914 Turkey allied with Germany in the First World War.
- 1915-1916 Turks attempt to invade the Suez Canal from Palestine.  
British negotiations with Sherif Hussein about Arab independence.  
Arab revolt in the Desert against the Turks.
- 1917 British Army captures Gaza, Jaffa, Jerusalem and Southern Palestine.  
British Government issues Declaration about Jewish National Home in Palestine.
- 1918 British Armies occupy the rest of Palestine and all Syria.
- 1920 The Mandate for Palestine allotted to Great Britain; Sir Herbert Samuel appointed High Commissioner.
- 1921 The Emir Abdullah of Arabia occupies the country on the east side of Jordan (Trans-Jordan). Recognized as ruler by British Government.
- 1925 Hebrew University of Jerusalem opened by Lord Balfour.
- 1936-1939 Arab revolt in Palestine against the British Administration.

A.D.

- 1937 Royal Commission recommends Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab States.
- 1939 British Government, after Conference in London with Jewish and Arab representatives, issue statement of policy about Palestine.
- 1941 British Forces occupy Syria.
- 1945 League of Arab States constituted at Alexandria. British Government appoint Anglo-American Commission to report on the Palestine problems.
- 1946 Emir Abdullah proclaimed King of Trans-Jordan.
- 1947 British Government applies to the United Nations for advice about Palestine Mandate. General Assembly adopts resolution for Partition of Palestine into Jewish and Arab States.
- 1948 January-May: Arabs and Jews engage in Civil War. British Mandate ends May 14th. Jews proclaim creation of State of Israel. Arab armies invade Israel territory. First cease-fire in June; second cease-fire, after ten days of resumed hostilities, in July.
- 1949 Armistice agreements between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. Israel elects Constituent Assembly (Knesset). Israel admitted to United Nations.
- 1952 Death of Dr. Weizmann; first President of Israel.

## A FEW BOOKS ON PALESTINE

- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Smith, Sir George Adam . . .  | <i>Historical Geography of the Holy Land.</i><br><i>Jerusalem.</i> |
| Macalister, R. A. S. . . .    | <i>A History of Civilization in Palestine.</i>                     |
| Parkes, James . . . . .       | <i>A History of Palestine.</i>                                     |
| Albright, Professor W. F. . . | <i>The Archaeology of Palestine.</i>                               |
| Hyamson, A. . . . .           | <i>Palestine, Past and Present.</i>                                |
| Antonius, George . . . . .    | <i>The Arab Awakening.</i>   |
| Thomas, Bertram . . . . .     | <i>The Arabs.</i>  |
| Cohen, Israel . . . . .       | <i>Jewish Life in Modern Times.</i>                                |
| Sacher, Harry . . . . .       | <i>Israel, The Making of a State.</i>                              |
| Glueck, Nelson . . . . .      | <i>The River Jordan.</i>   |
| Perowne, Stewart . . . . .    | <i>The One Remains (1954).</i>                                     |





*The Geography of Palestine*

PALESTINE is the Land of the Bible, though in the Bible it is not called that, but the Land of Israel or Canaan. Its modern name comes from a Latin form meaning the Country of the Philistines, of whom we read in the Bible. The Philistines were an invading people who sailed over the sea from the west, probably from Crete, about a century after the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt, i.e. about 1300 B.C. They fought for several centuries with the Children of Israel, who entered from the Desert on the east. They occupied the southern part of the coastal plain, and for a time also the northern part, while Israel dwelt in the highlands. They were the dominant power for only 200 years. The little country on the shores of the Eastern Mediterranean and on the edge of the Syrian Desert has been a meeting-place of East and West throughout its long history of five thousand years. It is one of the cradles of civilization which began in these eastern lands. And its caves, excavated in our time, have revealed skeletons and habitations of primitive man, which date back one hundred thousand years.

It is said that God made geography but once, and He placed Palestine in the centre of the earth. Maps of the Middle Ages, among them a monkish map in Hereford Cathedral, regularly show it at the centre; and a spot in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem is still marked as the traditional central point of the world. Palestine has been a highway or link between three Continents—Asia, Africa and Europe. It is a fertile strip of cultivable land between the Desert of Sinai on the borders of Egypt on the west and the Desert of Syria on the east, and it separates the valley of the Nile and the valley of the Tigris and Euphrates.

We all know the map of Palestine because, though it is a tiny country, it has a full page in the school atlas. Its shape is an oblong, bounded on the west by a gently curved line of the Mediterranean coast, with a break where the promontory of Mount Carmel juts out to the sea; and bounded on the east by an arbitrary straight line drawn along the Syrian Desert.

On the north are the mountains of the Lebanon, dominated by the stern majesty and snowy peak of Mount Hermon. On the south the Wilderness of Sinai stretches between two Seas, from the Mediterranean coast on the west to the Gulf of Akaba, a narrow inlet of the Red Sea, on the east.

Israel is a part of the country which we knew, till a few years ago, as Palestine. It is, too, a part, but not nearly the whole, of the Bible Land of Israel. It is a very small country, 'the least of lands', about 8000 square miles, less than the area of Wales. You may drive from end to end easily in one day. The Palestine which was under Mandatory British rule for thirty years, from 1918 to 1948, was divided into two separate administrations by the line of the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. The country to the west of that line was directly governed by the British. It was the territory in which the Jews were building their National Home, though the majority of the population throughout was Arab. The country to the east was known as Trans-Jordan—that is, across the Jordan. It was ruled by an Arab prince, or Emir, was an entirely Arab land, and was administered indirectly by the British.

Today the territory of Israel does not include even the whole of Palestine west of the River Jordan. For in the centre of Western Palestine a quadrilateral segment is part of the Arab State which is now called the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. This chunk, which gives the territory of Israel a very narrow waist, covers the southern section of the Jordan Valley, nearly all Samaria and a large part of Judea of the Bible times, including the ancient cities of Jerusalem, Jericho, Bethlehem and Hebron. Its inhabitants were, and are, Arabs.

Small as it is, Palestine offers a remarkable variety of landscapes, soils and climates. It is a country of mountain and plain, desert and pleasant valleys, lakes and seaboard, barren hills, desolate to the last degree of desolation, and stretches of fruitful soil. It 'distils extremes'. Two mountain ranges, parallel with each other, descend the length of Palestine from the Lebanon, on either side of the Jordan Valley. The range on the west forms the Hills of Galilee and the plateaus of Samaria and Judea. The range on the east side of Jordan, which is the higher, forms the mountains of Gilead, Moab and Midian. Between the ranges is the deep cleft of the Jordan Valley, the Dead Sea and, beyond it, the dry and wide river-bed known as the Araba (i.e. the Plain) that runs to the Gulf of Akaba. It is



part of the world's great rift, the result of earthquake and volcanic convulsion, which continues, through Nubia (South of Egypt) and Kenya, to the heart of Africa. In Palestine it reaches to the lowest depth of the world's surface, 1400 feet below sea-level. Perhaps it is this extraordinary nature which gives the atmosphere the peculiar quality to contract distance and shrink history. And it gives, too, a magical, mystic quality to the landscape.

Most of the southern half of the territory of Israel, the Negev, is today desert, uncultivated and seemingly uncultivable, stony brown plain, broken by wild ravines. But the northern part of this plain is being reclaimed for agricultural and industrial settlements by Jewish enterprise and science. Contour farming is practised so as to conserve soil and water; irrigation pipe-lines bring water from wells on the coast, and bigger projects of canals to conduct the water from the Upper Jordan are awaiting execution. In 1952, nearly a quarter million acres of the Negev were cultivated by dry farming, and yielded more than half Israel's cereal crops.

Palestine is divided into four principal zones by the two mountain ranges. On the west is a fertile coastal plain by the Mediterranean Sea, 150 miles long, from the Ladder of Tyre in the north to the frontier of Egypt at Gaza in the south. Sands from the Nile mouth have invaded part of the plain and created dunes that are now being reclaimed. Then a mountain plateau, which in the north is called Galilee, and in the centre Judea, is a criss-cross of hills and valleys. Some of the hills are terraced and fertile; others are eroded and bare. To the east these mountains fall precipitately to the valley of the Jordan, the Dead Sea, and its continuation in a wilderness, nearly 100 miles long and mostly below sea-level, down to the Gulf of Akaba. Finally, on the eastern side of the Jordan Valley, a high mountainous plateau and steppe stretch away to the sandy and stony desert of Syria.

The most populous part of Palestine is the coastal plain. It includes the two big towns of Tel-Aviv and Haifa, and half-a-dozen smaller towns. Nearly two-thirds of the population of Israel live in this zone. Jerusalem, the third big town, is not on the coast, but rises on the mountain plateau of Judea, 2500 feet above the sea. Jerusalem is today divided between the Jewish State and the Arab State. The Old City, surrounded by walls of the Middle Ages, and containing the Holy Places of

three world religions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—is part of the Arab Kingdom of Jordan. The new city outside the walls, built during the last hundred years, is Jewish, and is spreading over the hills. It is connected with the coastal plain by a corridor of Israel territory through the Judean Hills, which was sternly fought for in the War of Independence 1948. Today the corridor is intensively settled by agricultural groups of young Jews who keep watch and ward on the border.

From the coastal plain by Haifa a central valley runs to the Jordan gorge, dividing the mountain plateau of Galilee from the mountain plateau of Samaria and Judea. It is known as the Valley of Jezreel or, in its Greek form, Esdraelon. It, too, is dotted with Jewish agricultural settlements and intensively cultivated. On the north it is bounded by Mount Tabor, which is a symbol of beauty in the Bible. On the south rises the hill of Megiddo, which appears in the Book of Revelations as Armageddon, destined to be the site of the final battle before the Day of Judgment.

The population of Israel in 1953 was between 1,600,000 and 1,700,000. Nearly 1,500,000 were Jews, and about 180,000 were Arabs. The greater part of the Jewish population lived in the towns, and of the Arab population in villages. In the Jordan section of Western Palestine, which includes the plateau of Samaria, part of the Judean plateau, and the Old City of Jerusalem, the Arab population was about 500,000. In the country across Jordan there was another half million.

The most remarkable natural feature of Palestine is the abyss of the River Jordan and the Dead Sea. Most of the Jordan Valley lies hundreds of feet below sea-level, and the river itself, for a large part of its course, flows in a deep ditch. The Hebrew name means the Descender, and that is apt. For the river, which starts in four streams<sup>1</sup> under Mount Hermon, over 3000 feet above the sea, falls in cascades within a few miles to the Lake of Huleb, which is only a few hundred feet over sea-level. Ten miles further south it drops again into the Sea or Lake of Galilee, 600 feet below that level. The Sea of Galilee has a Hebrew name, Kinneret, meaning the Harp, because it is shaped like the musical instrument. When it leaves the lake, the Jordan descends more gradually, by endless twists and zigzag curves, another 700 feet, over an area of

<sup>1</sup> In the Middle Ages it was explained that Jordan had two sources, Jor and Dan.

sixty-five miles, to the Dead Sea. The serpentine course of the river is 200 miles.

The surface of the Dead Sea, that uncanny, confined lake, once part of a waterway joining the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, is 1400 feet below sea-level, and the depth of the water at its deepest is another 1400 feet. The Dead Sea is forty miles long and ten miles broad, about the same size as the Lake of Geneva. It is bordered on the west and the east by bare mountains, and no living thing is in its waters. Its Hebrew name is 'Sea of Salt', and its waters, full of minerals in solution, have a bitter taste and are oily to the touch. It is, paradoxically, an inexhaustible reservoir of potash, bromide, magnesium and the like, which are turned into life-giving substances. The 'Witches' Brew' is produced by extraordinary evaporation through the sun shining on the low, confined space. It is estimated that  $6\frac{1}{2}$  million tons of water flow daily into the Sea from the Jordan, and are evaporated.

In Bible days Palestine was well-wooded in the Sharon plain, and in Galilee there were thick forests. Even a few centuries ago the Forest of Arsuf, the remnant of the Sharon forest, hid a great army. The constant invasions of the country over two thousand years, and the neglect of centuries, denuded the land of trees. The mountains of Judea and Samaria, in which the remains of oak forests can still be traced, became bare. Only in Galilee, particularly on the slopes of Mount Jirmuk that rises 4000 feet, did part of the forest survive. During the period of British rule, however, and still more during the years of the State of Israel, afforestation of the hill-sides to check soil erosion has been steadily proceeding. Each year millions of trees, eucalyptus, wattles, carobs and pines, are planted. The hill country is reclaimed to cultivation. New villages of Jewish immigrants, which are springing up on all sides, are marked by their woodland, and serried lines of trees are planted along the new highways. The wild flowers of Palestine are famous. After the winter rains hill and plain are carpeted with anemones and cyclamen, lupins and poppies, hollyhocks (originally holy-hocks) and the 'lilies of the field', which surpass Solomon in all his glory.

The coastal plain is the most fertile, as well as the most populous part of the land. Its width varies from a few miles, between the mountain of Carmel and the sea, to thirty miles in the south. Orange, grapefruit and banana groves are planted



over it. The orange was not an indigenous fruit of Palestine; it was brought there by Portuguese merchant adventurers. Today the Jaffa seedless oranges are famous all over the world, and oranges and grapefruit were the most important export of the country before the Second World War. They were sent mainly to England. The interruption of sea-transport during that war, and the destruction of orchards during the War of 1948 between the Jews and the Arabs, have caused temporarily a diminution of the export.

The olive-tree also flourishes in Palestine, in the hill country as well as in the coastal plain. It was cultivated largely by the Arabs, and the oil used not only for food but for the making of soap. In the Bible Palestine is described as the land flowing with milk and honey. It has been explained indeed that that description was given to the country not by 'a party of beef-fed tourists', but by hungry tribes who had wandered in the Wilderness for forty years. Today, however, dairy-farming is one of the principal forms of agriculture, and the country is nearly self-supporting for milk, eggs, and other forms of dairy produce. As in England, most of the wheat required by the urban population is imported.

If, however, Palestine has not been, and is not now, exceptionally fertile, its hilly country, which is between 2000 and 4000 feet above the sea, is one of the healthiest regions in the Middle East. It made the Israelites, and later the Jews and Arabs, a strong and rugged people. A distinguished archaeologist of our day, Professor Albright, has pointed out: "Ancient Israel is a parade example of Toynbee's doctrine, the stimulus of hard countries."

Industrial areas have been spread around the three principal cities, and factories are built in other parts of the country. For Israel is, and will be, a highly industrialized State. Three-fourths of its population live in towns, and it is planned to maintain that ratio. Ten new medium-sized towns developed from villages have sprung up. The only important raw materials, hitherto, have been stone and lime and the minerals in solution in the Dead Sea; which are in almost infinite quantities. But in recent years a beginning has been made with the extraction of other minerals in the Negev, and with the production of plastics. The Negev, which was the area of King Solomon's Mines, has been proved to be rich in some of the basic minerals of industry. Copper, manganese and phosphate rock

are there in vast quantities; and new asphalted roads will enable them to be transported to Beersheba and the Gulf of Akaba.

A favourite slogan in Israel is: 'The conquest of the Sea', which must follow the conquest of the Land. Israel is the successor of the Phoenicians as well as of the Hebrews. Along the Phoenician Coast the young Jews have built or occupied a line of fishing villages. And sea-trawling is expanded each year. Some of the vessels go far afield, not only in the Mediterranean, but in the Atlantic and the North Sea. Fishery has been developed also in Israel's second sea, the Gulf of Akaba, which is stocked with all manner of rare species. For the time, however, the area of Israel's operations in that land-locked Gulf is narrowly restricted by the Egyptian blockade. But her 'manifest destiny' is on the sea.

Another form of fishery is the breeding of carp in fresh-water ponds in many agricultural settlements. That culture was brought from Central Europe, and has been developed during the last twenty years on a large scale, so that today it is often the most profitable part of the collective and co-operative farming. For it may yield two or even three harvests a year. And poor land and water which is not sweet may serve for the sowing of fish. It has been said by the cultivators that they make more money from bad land covered with bad water than from good land irrigated with good water.

The country of the eastern area, i.e. the section of Palestine across Jordan, from the east bank of the river to the Syrian or North Arabian Desert, is still largely pastoral, as in Bible times, and the population is still in part nomad. Arab tribesmen graze their herds of camels and cattle and their flocks of sheep and goats on the uplands of Gilead and Moab. Outwardly they resemble the Hebrews of 3000 years ago. The breadth of the fertile strip between the Jordan and the Desert varies from forty to eighty miles, about the same breadth as Palestine Cis-Jordan. Sir George Adam-Smith, in the *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, described it as "a Land of Health"; and Doughty, the famous traveller of an earlier generation in the Arab lands, described it as "of noble aspect in these bald countries". In the era of the Graeco-Roman Empire the region was one of the principal granaries.

The mountains rise abruptly from the Jordan Valley to a height of 3500 to 4000 feet. Perennial water is found in the deep lateral valleys, and several rivers, e.g. the Jabbok, the

Zerka, flow from the plateau to the Jordan. The settled population is sparse, and even the fertile land in the Jordan Valley is not permanently settled. In recent years, however, Amman, the capital of the Kingdom of Jordan, and on the site of the Hellenistic and Roman city of Philadelphia, in the midst of the plateau east of Jericho, has grown from a village of a few thousand inhabitants to a town of 100,000.

Besides Amman there were in the present territory of Trans-Jordan two other big cities in that Graeco-Roman era. They belonged to the league of ten Hellenistic towns known as the Decapolis. They were Gerasa, the modern Jerash, in Gilead, north-west of Amman; and Gadara, further to the north, near the junction of the Rivers Yarmuk and the Jordan. Jerash was for 700 years a centre of Greek and Byzantine civilization. It was destroyed in the Moslem occupation, and was stagnant for centuries till our own day. Gadara, the place from which the Gadarene swine rushed down the steep slope to the Sea of Galilee, was similarly destroyed, but the imposing remains of Greek theatres and temples survive. It was famous for its hot springs and for its culture, and was known in the early centuries as the 'Garland of the Muses'.

In recent years an irrigation scheme on a large scale, by the use of the waters of the Yarmuk, for the fuller development of the plain and the uplands has been worked out. It would harness the waters of the river, which rises in the eastern plateau and descends in waterfalls and rapids into the Jordan near the southern end of the Sea of Galilee. Before science changed the natural course of the waters, these falls, flowing under an old Roman bridge and flanked with oleander bushes, formed one of the beauty spots of Palestine. Twenty-five years ago, the face of the landscape was changed; and a mere trickle of water is all that remains of the falls, whilst a lake holding 1,500,000 cubic metres of water has been created. The lower waters of the river were canalized for the purpose of the Palestine hydro-electric scheme, which had its station near the junction. The waters of both Yarmuk and Jordan were led tamely and obediently to form the placid lake, and then were passed through tubes down a cemented slope to work the turbines. Since 1948 the station, which is in Jordan territory, has been out of use. The new and larger irrigation scheme is designed to provide land for settlement of 100,000 cultivators, who are at present refugees living homeless in Jordan.



Palestine is well served with railways linking it with North Africa and Western Asia. But since the creation of Israel and the blockade by the Arab States, the lines have been little used except for internal traffic. The oldest was built in the Turkish time by a French company, from Jaffa to Jerusalem. The next in age was a branch-line, built by the Turkish State, from Haifa along the Vale of Esdraelon and the southern shores of the Lake of Galilee, to be linked with the pilgrim railway from Damascus through Trans-Jordan to the Arabian peninsula. During the First World War the Turks began, and the British completed, a line along the coastal plain. It is connected on the one hand with Egypt by the Sinai railway, laid along the northern part of the Wilderness to the Suez Canal at Kantara, and on the other hand with Lebanon and Syria by a continuation of the line to Beirut, and thence to Damascus and Aleppo. These continental connections are temporarily broken by the state of cold war between Israel and the Arab States.

There is a good airfield for civil aviation at Lydda—the original home of England's patron Saint, St. George—which is one of the air-junctions on the routes across Asia. Israel possesses also a chain of military airfields which were constructed for the British forces during the Second World War.

Throughout its history Palestine was a highway for the peoples and armies passing between Asia and Africa; it has been named the Land of the Road. It had also, throughout its history, attracted the peoples coming from Europe across the Mediterranean Sea. Egyptians and Hittites, Assyrians and Babylonians, Phoenicians and Philistines, Greeks and Romans, Frank knights and Saracens have met and fought there. And all these peoples have left their mark on the country. But two nations above all are associated with the land. They have given it the special character which it has for mankind, and today share its government and mould its destiny. They are the Jews, the Hebrews and the Children of Israel of the Bible—and the Arabs. The French Philosopher of the eighteenth century, Montesquieu, gives Palestine as an example of a country that went to ruin when it lost its proper inhabitants.

"Since the destruction of Jerusalem by Hadrian (the Roman Emperor of the second century A.D.), Palestine has been uninhabited. We must admit that a great destruction



is irreparable, because a people which lacks a certain centre remains in the same position."

His remark is being corrected today, when the Jews are returning in great numbers to their country, and the Arabs are again a vigorous and independent nation. And we must now examine the history of the two peoples, the Jews and the Arabs, in connection with the land.

*The Jews in History*

FOR 3500 years the Jews have been bound up with the Land of Israel—either because they were living in it, or in their dispersion they were yearning for it and prayed daily for return, or they were actively striving for restoration as a nation. They are the most historical people in the world, in that they have a longer history than any other; and they were, till the most recent years, also the most international people, in that they were dispersed more than any other among the nations. It has been said that they enjoyed too much history and too little geography. With them, however, race, religion and country were bound up as in the case of no other religion and no other country. To understand their movement, during the last hundred years, for return to Palestine and re-establishing the Jewish State, it is necessary to trace briefly their history.

In the Bible the people, sometimes called Hebrews, sometimes the Children of Israel, formed two Kingdoms. The realm of David and Solomon was divided after Solomon's death, and the northern part was the Kingdom of Israel. The Jews, strictly speaking, were the people who lived in Judea, the southern part of Palestine which was the Kingdom of Judah. From Bible times the Hebrews and the Jews have been a 'peculiar people', with a different way of life as well as a different religion from their neighbours. Since the first captivity of Judah, about 600 B.C., which is recounted in the Bible, when the mass were taken by the conqueror from Judea to Babylon, most of them have been a minority living for long periods on sufferance among other nations.

Though the coastal plain of Palestine has been a highway between Africa and Asia, and between Egypt and Syria, and Palestinian civilization has been deeply affected by the civilization of those lands in which mankind first developed literature and the arts, yet the Jewish people who inhabited the hill country were isolated. They had a sturdy spirit of independence derived from their religion and moral teaching. They resisted the pagan cults of their neighbours, sifted the

cultures of the conquering nations of the East and West, and remoulded any foreign ideas with their own religious traditions. That independent character was preserved through the generations. The Jews were the great Nonconformists of history.

From the time of the second captivity, in the first century of the Christian era, when the Romans, under Titus, having destroyed the Temple and razed the City of Jerusalem, carried away the great part of the people as slaves, the Jews lacked political power. Not only had they no State, but they were without a homeland. They were dispersed in all parts of the Roman Empire, which then extended to Britain; and beyond it, particularly in the Eastern countries (formerly Mesopotamia and Persia), which we now know as Iraq and Iran. Yet a remnant of the people remained in the Holy Land, holding to their special way of life, cultivating the soil, and maintaining their schools and their religious colleges.

Throughout the Roman Empire, moreover, they carried on vigorously a religious mission side by side and competing with the Christians, and made many proselytes among the pagans. After the Roman Empire, hitherto pagan, was turned by the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, into a Christian State, the Jews were persecuted as a religious community under a curse. It was made difficult for them to continue to live in the Holy Land, and an offence punishable with death to carry on their religious mission. The policy of the Christian Church was to let them exist as a separate community, but to exclude them from civil life. They were witnesses to the truth of Christianity. But their lot was made miserable, and they were put in a condition of glaring inferiority to that of the true believers, in order that the predictions against those who refused to accept Christ should be fulfilled.

The centre of their dispersed nation was removed in the sixth century from the Roman and Christian realm to the Persian Empire, which professed the Zoroastrian religion and was more tolerant than the Christian. A century later, the Arabs, bursting out like a volcano from Arabia, overran both the Byzantine Christian and the Persian Empires. They were inspired by a monotheist religious teaching of Mohamed, who was greatly influenced by Jewish and Christian missionaries. Except in Arabia itself, they generally showed tolerance and humanity towards the 'Peoples of the Book', that is, the Jews and the Christians. Jews in small numbers were able to return



to Palestine; and for hundreds of years their communities lived on happy terms with the Arabs in the Middle East, in North Africa and in Spain, which were comprised in the Empire of Islam. They spoke and wrote Arabic, and emulated the Arabs in philosophy, poetry, science and art. They were great carriers of culture as well as of goods between the East and the West, the middle-men of civilization. Having their 'colonies' also in the Christian States, they were the intermediaries between the Moslem and the Christian people. They helped to carry the knowledge of Greek and Latin civilization to the Arabs, and later, to carry the Arab philosophy and science based on that civilization into the Latin world.

Lacking a land and compelled to wander, they turned from cultivation of the soil to craftsmanship, trade and finance. Because of these skills they were admitted into the Christian Kingdoms, which bordered on the Moslem realm, particularly Spain, Italy and Provence. The Norman Kings of England, also, encouraged small bodies of them to settle in their Kingdom; and there, as in other feudal countries, they were instruments for the strengthening of the King's power over the Barons. They were used by their Royal masters, whose chattels they were in law, to extract money from the Barons and the Burghers. Their financial function inevitably drew upon them the hatred of the common people; and there were frequent massacres. They were expelled from England, owing to popular clamour, by Edward I, at the end of the thirteenth century, and did not return for over three hundred years. The street named Old Jewry in the City of London, close to the Mansion House and the Bank of England, commemorates their residence in the capital; and there was a 'Jewry' in the medieval quarters of Canterbury, York and several other English towns.

As the power of the Moslem Moors declined, and that of the Christians advanced, in Spain, the religious liberty and security of the Jews were undermined in that country, which was then their cultural centre. The Jews were regarded by the Roman Catholic Sovereigns as dangerous infidels and threatening the Christian character of the State. In 1492, a year after the Christian Conquest of the last Moorish Kingdom in Spain, the Jewish community of about half a million, who for four centuries had produced a remarkable culture, were driven out in exile. A few years later, the smaller community in Portugal was expelled. By a striking coincidence, in the very year of the

expulsion from Spain, Christopher Columbus discovered the continent of America that was to become the home of religious freedom and of the largest Jewish community in the world. He is believed to have been of Jewish origin, and he noted, in his Log of the voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, the ships that were carrying the exiles. The aim of Columbus was to deliver Jerusalem from the infidel. He failed in that, but discovered a new Land of Promise.

The Reformation and the Renaissance, which brought a religious and intellectual stirring to Western Europe, brought no relief or enlightenment for the Jews in that region. Indeed the darkest ages began for them in the fifteenth century. They had to carry on a desperate struggle to preserve their existence till the dawn of the age of tolerance in the eighteenth century. The mass no longer lived, as in the Middle Ages, in the most civilized countries. They were concentrated in Central and Eastern Europe, in Poland, Lithuania, the Ukraine and Turkey, which were countries of relatively low intellectual culture. Cut off in their ghettos from the Gentile population, they maintained a measure of autonomy and their religious organization of civil life. While their neighbours were illiterate, they had their own schools and, as Bernard Shaw once said of them, "They were born educated". They had, too, their own language. In Western and Central Europe it was Yiddish, a German dialect of the Middle Ages which they had brought from the Rhineland; and in the countries of the Levant it was Ladino, a Spanish tongue that was carried by the exiles from Spain.

Protestant, liberty-loving Holland was the first country in the West to give them religious freedom at the end of the sixteenth century, about the time of Elizabeth I. Their philosopher Spinoza, who belonged to a family exiled from Spain, was a prophet of the more liberal conception of the State which allowed for differences of religious creed. And in Amsterdam a congregation of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, from the end of the sixteenth century, played an important part in the commercial and colonial development of the Dutch.

Oliver Cromwell learned from the Dutch the wisdom and value of tolerance to the Jews; and he was moved by the persuasion of a learned Rabbi from Holland, and by a shrewd understanding of the interests of his country, to allow Jews to settle in England as merchants. For more than a century,



however, they enjoyed no political rights in England. In the reign of Charles II a synagogue was built in the City of London, which was gradually taking the place of Amsterdam as the centre of international trade. The famous writer Addison wrote, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, of the Jews: "They are so disseminated through all the leading parts of the World that they are become the instruments by which the most distant nations converse with one another."

The French Revolution, with its fundamental doctrine of the Rights of Man, brought about great changes in the position of the few thousand Jews who were living in Western Europe. The ideas of Liberty and Equality were extended to the Jewish communities living in countries conquered by Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon, indeed, caused a representative assembly of French Jews, Rabbis and laymen, gathered in a modern Sanhedrin or Council, to examine the terms of Jewish admission to political life. To obtain these rights the Jews denied any separate national aspirations, and claimed to be only a religious community. They were to cease to be a separate people, to speak the language of the country, and to adapt their law about marriage and divorce to the law of the land.

The struggle for their political emancipation was long-drawn in conservative England. Progress came by a series of practical steps, each taken after a hard struggle. It was not till 1858 that a Jew, a member of the Rothschild family, who had been several times elected to Parliament, was able to take his seat in the House of Commons by a change in the Parliamentary oath. That oath had hitherto contained the words, "on the true faith of a Christian". Gradually, too, Jews won the right of admission to the Universities and to the liberal professions. Their intellectual energies, so long confined in the ghettos, burst out with a remarkable spate of genius in the liberal democracies. In the first generation of enlightenment their small community gave to England the statesman Benjamin Disraeli—though he professed Christianity—the astronomer Herschel, and the economist Ricardo. And in Germany they produced the poet Heine and the musical composer Mendelssohn.

Throughout the nineteenth century, however, the mass of the Jews in Europe were still living in the Russian Empire of the Czars. There the theory and practice of the Church-State, excluding from public life all who were not Christians, were

maintained inflexibly. The Jews within that realm, who, through the Russian annexation of the greater part of Poland and Lithuania, formed the majority of the Jewish people, were denied civil and political rights, and were confined to a Pale of Settlement. The repression drove hundreds of thousands in Eastern Europe to seek new homes in the more liberal countries of the West. A great and continuous migration from Russia and Roumania, particularly to the New World, gradually changed the character of the Jewries of Western Europe and America. Thus the community in the United States, which in 1883 numbered less than a quarter of a million, had grown by the end of the century to about three millions. Of that mass-migration a large part were in New York. The movement from Eastern Europe to Great Britain was smaller; but at the end of the century the majority of the quarter of a million Jews in the United Kingdom were no longer English-born or German Jews, but Polish and Russian.

At the same time, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, Jewish national feeling was revived, especially amongst the East European Jews. The hope of the restoration of a Jewish nationality to its ancient home, which had been the ideal of the people for near two thousand years of exile and suffering, came to the beginning of fulfilment. The movement for the revival of old nations was one of the main political forces of the century. It had brought about the liberation from Ottoman rule of the Christian Balkan peoples. It had brought about, also, the resurrection of the Italian nation and the unity of the German people. Last of all, it had affected the Jews. A new form of anti-Jewish feeling in Germany and Austria, based on spurious ideas of race, and known as Anti-Semitism, nourished the Jewish National Movement. The infection of Anti-Semitism spread even to liberal France. The aim of the Jews was no longer emancipation but auto-emancipation.

The First World War produced another radical transformation of Jewish life. Through the Soviet revolution in Russia it broke down the walls of the last ghetto; and the three million Jews left in the Soviet Union became equal citizens. Through the break-up of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the creation of a group of succession States in Central Europe—Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia—each fostering an intense national consciousness, it opened a new



status for the Jewish communities. They were recognized national groups, though their minority rights were to a great extent nullified by economic discrimination. Through the social revolution in Germany it broke down for a short—but only for a short—time the barriers of racial and social discrimination which had excluded Jews from higher positions in German public life. Lastly, through the deliverance of Palestine from Turkish rule, and the adoption first by England, and then by the League of Nations, of the idea of a National Home for the Jews in their old country, it gave new hope and a fresh spiritual aspiration to all communities.

There was, however, a darker side to the liberation of the Jews. Anti-Semitism, which had shown its ugly head in Germany and other European countries before the First World War, was terribly strengthened after the War through the need of a large section of the German people to find a scapegoat for their defeat in the War and their frustrated pride. The defenceless Jew was the chosen victim for the National Socialist party formed by Hitler; and hatred of the Jew by the little man was an instrument of policy. The Jew connotes in the public mind, particularly in times of stress, not only a member of a religious community but a member of a race and of a nationality. In the Dark and Middle Ages it was his religious distinctiveness which was uppermost. In the most recent period, since Hitler's frenzied and barbarous campaign was launched on the Western World, the element of race has been uppermost. The idea which Hitler propagated was that the Aryan race—which was a fiction—and particularly the Nordic part of it, were superior, and the Semitic race, of which the Jews were a part, were inferior, and should be excluded from any part in public life. In the crisis of the War, savagely giving vent to his frenzied hatred, he sought to exterminate all the Jews that came within his grasp, and did in fact organize massacres of the great majority of those who were in Europe.

The distribution of the people has been completely transformed by the massacre of six millions in Europe and the forced migration from Europe of another million. The United States has today a population of over five million Jews, which is nearly half of the whole people. Another half million have emigrated to South America. The United Kingdom has four hundred thousand; and the British Commonwealth altogether about three-quarters of a million. Lastly, the Jews

in Palestine, who at the end of the First World War numbered about seventy thousand, increased tenfold during the thirty years of the British Mandate; and during the seven years since the State of Israel was created have doubled their total. They number now one and a half million.

Relics of the older Jewish dispersion in Asia and North Africa remained for centuries in those countries under Moslem rule; and had become assimilated to the Arab population. While the Jews in Europe and America in the nineteenth century took a leading part in the political, economic and cultural life of their country, and brought an extraordinary contribution of the mind to those countries, the Jews living in the countries of Islam were backward, like the Arabs, in economic and cultural development, and were subject to political discrimination. One of the striking results of the creation of the State of Israel is a large and growing mass-movement of these Oriental communities to the land of Israel. Over one-third of the million who were living in these countries in 1948 have already found a new home.

Another striking change in the condition of the Jews which the State of Israel has brought about is the movement to a simpler way of life. For centuries the Jews in most parts of the world have been an urban population, debarred from the ownership and cultivation of the land, and forced by circumstances to engage in trade. One of the motives of the return to the Land of Israel was to cultivate the soil and regenerate it. During the period of the Mandate, about one-quarter of the Jewish population in Palestine were living in rural areas; and about one-fifth part were engaged in agriculture. That proportion is maintained in the State of Israel. A larger proportion are engaged in manual work in industry, heavy and light. And the influence of the life in Israel begins to permeate the Jewish communities in other countries, so that their occupational distribution is becoming more normal.

In Israel the Jewish people have developed a system of voluntary socialism. The agricultural settlements are organized as collective or co-operative groups. In the collective settlements there is no private property, but, as with the early Christian communities, everything is held in common. In the co-operative settlements each family has its own holding, but the agricultural work, credit, marketing and supply of consumer needs are organized through co-operative societies. The

Socialist ideal was adopted voluntarily, without support of the State, in the days of the British Administration. It is maintained with that support in the State of Israel.

Above all, the State of Israel has given to the Jews a centre of their social and spiritual life. Lord Balfour, who gave his name to the declaration about English help for the establishment of the Jewish National Home, said in the House of Lords, when the confirmation of the Mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations was debated:

"Christendom is not unmindful of the service the Jews have rendered to the great religions of the world, and we desire to give them the opportunity of developing, in peace and under British rule, their gifts which hitherto they have been compelled to bring to fruition in countries which know not their language and belong not to their race."

And one of the oldest and most steadfast gentile friends of Zionism, who was also an outstanding statesman of the British Commonwealth, Field-Marshal Smuts, expressed the deeper significance of the rebirth of the Jewish nation in its own home:

"The Balfour Declaration is based on historic justice. It constitutes a great act of historic reparation, and it renews once more the promise which is basic to Jewish history."



*The Arabs in History*

WE turn back thirteen hundred years to trace the origin of the other people inhabiting Palestine, whose political, social and economic development is one of the major problems of the world society in our day. The Arab people conquered the Holy Land and Syria in the seventh century of the Christian era, at the time when England was being invaded by the Angles and Saxons and Danes. The Arab conquest of the Middle East, and then of the Near East and North Africa and Spain, was one of the turning points of history. It started immediately after the death of Mohamed, who founded the religion which commonly we call Mohamedan after his name, but which is properly entitled Islam, meaning resignation to God. A Moslem is a person who resigns himself.

Before Mohamed's day the nomad tribes living in the arid Arabian peninsula were pagans. But in Arabia settlements of Jews and Christians spread their religion and made proselytes. Mohamed, who was a camel-driver of Mecca and led trading caravans to Palestine and to Syria, learnt from them the ideas of the one God. He had visions, and was possessed by a mission to get rid of the worship of idols among the Arab people. His creed was simple. God is one, and Mohamed is his messenger to man. He preached that mission first to his own tribe and in his home-town of Mecca, which was a centre of the pagan worshippers. He and his followers were forced by the vested pagan interests to flee for their lives. They found refuge in a city one hundred miles to the north, then called Yathrib (which became known later as El-Medina, meaning 'the City of the Prophet'). Just as the Christians had started an era of history — (A.D.) — from the time of Christ, so the Moslems started a new era of history from the year that Mohamed fled from Mecca. It is referred to by the initials 'A.H.', that stand for the Year of the Flight (Hegira). That corresponded with the year 622 of the Christian era. Eight years later Mohamed captured Mecca, and made it the centre of the new faith.

Mohamed was the founder of a world religion, which spread with extraordinary rapidity over Western and Central

Asia and over North and East Africa; of the Arab nation, which in a hundred years conquered half the then known world; and of the Islamic Empire, which for a thousand years included a great part of Asia, Africa, and Southern Europe. In Mohamed's lifetime a great struggle was going on between two big Empires of the West and the East; the Byzantine, which was the successor of Imperial Rome and was Christian, and the Persian, which was the successor of the old Kingdom of Cyrus and professed the Zoroastrian creed. The two had fought each other bitterly in Palestine, and captured and recaptured Jerusalem. Mohamed sent deputations to both to tell them of his revelation, and called on the Emperors to accept Islam.

His mission on its return from the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, was killed in Syria. Shortly before his death, Mohamed was preparing an expedition of the Arabs to take revenge. After his death one of his lieutenants marched into Syria, and in two years conquered the whole country. The decisive battle was fought in A.D. 636, by the banks of the River Yarmuk which flows into the Jordan. Damascus, the capital of Syria, and Jerusalem fell to the conqueror, Omar. He did not disturb the Christians or Jews in their worship, or make any attempt to force them to adopt the new religion of Islam. At that time the Mohamedans were concerned to root out paganism, but they recognized Christians and Jews as 'peoples of the Book' who worshipped the one God, and allowed them to retain their religious way of life.

Another of Mohamed's lieutenants led an expedition against the Persians, and in a few years he also conquered a vast Empire. First Iraq, which was then known as Mesopotamia, meaning the land between the two rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and then Persia itself were occupied and brought under Arab rule. A few years later a third Arab warrior-sheikh amongst Mohamed's followers advanced into Egypt, and captured the principal town, Alexandria, then the chief centre of Greek culture (A.D. 642). He set up his headquarters at Fustat, which became afterwards Cairo. Egypt, like Syria and Palestine, had been part of the Byzantine Christian Empire. The Arab conqueror of Alexandria, Amr, built a fleet and captured Cyprus, another part. From Egypt, the invincible Arabs, now masters of the Eastern Mediterranean, advanced by sea and land along the North African coast to Morocco



and the Atlantic Ocean. They imposed their religious faith on the Berber tribes.

In the year A.D. 710, the Arab Tariq, with 7000 men, invaded Spain. That country was ruled by the Christian Visigoths. He routed King Roderick, captured his capital of Toledo, and occupied the whole of the peninsula except a northern strip. The place where he landed, across the straits from Tangier, received his name, Gebel (mountain) Tariq, which we know today as Gibraltar. Twenty years later the Arabs pressed on to the conquest of France, and advanced as far as Tours, in the centre of the country. But there they were checked by the Frankish King, Charles Martel, the grandfather of the great Emperor Charlemagne.

The Arab advance on the East was not less spectacular. In a generation they carried their religion and their Empire through Central Asia to Samarkand and Bokhara, to Western India and Afghanistan. And with their religion they carried also their language. Arabic became the common tongue of the peoples of the Islamic Empire, just as Latin had been the common language of the Roman Empire. The Arabs of that age were great traders. It is a mistake to think that before the time of Mohamed they were all nomad tribesmen. In fact, the successors of Mohamed founded a commercial as well as a political and religious Empire.

The head both of the religion and of the Arab nation was the Caliph, which is the Arabic word for successor. Mohamed left no son. His daughter's husband, Ali, claimed to be the Caliph, but there was a movement against him, and he was killed in battle. The Caliphate was assumed by a brother-in-law of Mohamed, Moawiya, who founded the Omayyad dynasty. Their capital was Damascus; and for a hundred years Syria and Palestine were the centres of the Islamic Empire. The Omayyad rulers cherished the love of the desert and the Arab nomad life; and they built themselves beautiful palaces and hunting lodges on the edge of the Syrian desert. They were great patrons of the arts; and using Byzantine artists and craftsmen, they built noble mosques, public buildings and citadels. For a century they ruled an empire which stretched from the Sea of Aral in Turkestan on the north to the Sudan in the south, and from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the River Indus in the east.

Then came a fresh struggle for power between the East

and the West, like the struggle between the Persian and the Byzantine Empires. It was now fought out between two sections of the Moslems. The Persian branch, led by one Abbas, defeated the Omayyads, and established a new centre of the Caliphate in the East. There it remained for three hundred years. In A.D. 762, the Abbassid Caliphs built a new city, Bagdad, and made that the capital. It was from Bagdad that the stories which are collected in the famous book *Arabian Nights* were derived. One of the Omayyad princes escaped to Spain, and founded another Arab dynasty with its capital in Cordova.

By the ninth century the supremacy of the Arab families descended from the original followers of Mohamed began to be challenged in the conquered countries. Egypt made herself an independent Power, and conquered Syria and Southern Palestine. Then, in the tenth century, a fresh Arab dynasty was established in Egypt. It called itself Fatimite, because its head claimed descent from Fatima, the daughter of Mohamed. The Fatimite Sultans built a new and splendid capital, Cairo (meaning 'the city of victory'—El Kahira). They were less tolerant of the Christians than the older dynasties; and trouble began under their rule for the Christian pilgrims from Europe, who continued to make the journey to the Holy Places in Palestine. A little later, in the beginning of the eleventh century, the Seljuks, warriors coming from Turkestan and converts of Islam, in a fresh wave of invasion conquered Palestine, and made more trouble for the Christians. Their oppression of the pilgrims led to the movement for the recovery by arms of the Holy Land by the Western Christians. We know that struggle as the Wars of the Crusades. The first impulse was given by the fiery call of Peter the Hermit in 1094, and in 1096 an ill-ordered mob set out across Europe to recover the land, but failed to reach it.

For two hundred years and more, the Crusades, meaning the struggle between the Cross (Crux) and the Crescent—the crest of the Moslems—were waged in many parts of the Near and Middle East. At the end of the eleventh century a vast Christian army, with its followers estimated at one million, gathered in Western Europe, marched or sailed to the Near East, and succeeded in capturing Syria and Palestine and Jerusalem. The Holy City became the capital of a Latin Christian Kingdom, which was ordered as a feudal state. The Christian knights who entered Jerusalem chose one of the



Norman barons, Baldwin, as King. The Latin Kingdom endured for eighty-eight years, and extended over a large part of Syria as well as Palestine. The countries were divided into fiefs. Strong castles were built on the commanding positions, and there the feudal barons maintained themselves amid the Moslem population.

A great Moslem warrior, by race a Kurd, who was the Vizier, or Chief Minister of the Sultan of Damascus and Egypt, having destroyed the power of the knights at the battle of the Horns of Hattin in Galilee, recaptured Jerusalem in 1189, for the Moslems. He was Saladin (Salah-ed-Din), famous in English history, because the English warrior King, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, fought him. Richard went out to the Holy Land at the head of a Crusade to recapture Jerusalem, but failed. For another century, however, the Christian knights were able to retain their hold in the coastal plain of Palestine and Syria, in fortified places like Acre and Athlit.

During this troubled period the Middle East was invaded by fresh hordes of conquering Nomads, the Mongols and Tartars, who came from further Asia. For a time Christians and Moslems were united against them. Then for a time the Christians were allied *with* them against the Moslems. Finally, they were defeated by an Egyptian Arab warrior in a decisive battle near Baisan in Palestine, and their advance was stayed. They had, however, destroyed the chief centres of Arab civilization in the East, particularly in Mesopotamia, and laid waste a large part of Palestine. The decline of the Middle East in prosperity and culture dates from their invasion.

After the Mongols and the Tartars, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, came one more wave of warrior invaders. They were the Ottoman Turks. Originally nomads and pagans in Central Asia, they had adopted Islam after they came in touch with the Arab Kingdoms. They proved themselves the most powerful fighters that the world had known since the Arab conquest. By the end of the fifteenth century they had made themselves masters of the whole Arab Empire, and had finally destroyed the Byzantine Christian Empire. It was in 1453 that they captured Constantinople or Byzantium, which, with its splendid walls and forts, had remained invincible for a thousand years. They conquered all the Balkan countries and Hungary, and advanced several times to the gates of Vienna. But there they were stayed by the Christian armies.



In the Middle Ages Arab civilization was far ahead of European in the sciences and the arts. The Crusaders brought home with them from the East something of the knowledge and the sense of beauty which they had acquired there. Our European languages bear witness to the influence of Arab civilization. Thus the words damask and divan in household matters, zero and algebra in mathematics, admiral and arsenal in military, lute and guitar in musical, are all imported from the Arabic.

The Turkish conquest marked the final decline of the Arab power and the Arab peoples; and that decline lasted till the latter part of the nineteenth century. The Arabs were for the 400 years a subject people, not indeed oppressed, because the Turks being Moslems were tolerant and easy-going towards other Moslem peoples, but deprived of political independence, and stagnant economically, socially and culturally.

For 700 years the Arabs had led the world in civilization, in science and philosophy, as well as in military prowess. But following the Renaissance the Western nations regained pre-eminence. Western influences began to spread over the East, and the European Powers established their trading posts in the Arab lands. The Portuguese were the pioneers. Vasco da Gama, who circumnavigated Africa, for a time occupied Aden; and a little later Albuquerque planted colonies in the Persian Gulf and on the West coast of India. After the Portuguese came the Dutch; and then, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, an English line of merchant adventurers of the Levant Chartered Company established a 'factory', as it was called, in the Syrian town of Aleppo. It became the practice for the European nations to obtain from the Ottoman Sultans special concessions and privileges for these trading stations. The Charters granting them were called 'capitulations', because they were divided into a number of chapters (*Capitula*). The Sultan granted the Consul, or other representative, of the Christian Power the right of trying suits between members of the foreign community; and gradually the foreigner became the privileged person.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries England was the greatest Power in the Middle East, and indeed in the whole Moslem world, because of her dominating position in India and of her great commercial interests everywhere. And the English people had a special regard for the Arabs as a freedom-loving

race. A succession of English travellers to Arab countries kept that affection warm. One of the most famous of them, Lady Hester Stanhope, a grand-daughter of William Pitt the elder, and the niece of William Pitt the younger, spent the last thirty years of her life among the Arabs, living in the Lebanon and holding court, and was acclaimed by some of the Sheiks as 'Queen of the East'.

The national consciousness of the Arabs began to revive during the nineteenth century, the era of nationalism, and to prevail over the feeling for the political unity of Islam. While it was not till the latter part of the century that a political movement for self-determination of the Arabs was organized, several major incidents before that movement reflected the stirring of national pride and the passing of the passive mood. The revolt of Mohammed Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, against the Turkish Sultan, which is mentioned on p. 46, is commonly taken as the prelude to the Arab revival. Though he was an Albanian and knew little Arabic, the acceptance of his rule by the Arabs of Syria and Palestine was due in part to his role as liberator from the Turks. Then in 1860, the Christian Maronites of the Lebanon, with French help, won the grant of autonomy for the Lebanon province under a Christian-Arab Governor. By the beginning of the twentieth century the Arab awakening had come.

In the war of 1914-18, the British made Arab national feeling an instrument of the war policy against Turkey. Through Colonel Lawrence they negotiated with Arab leaders a 'Revolt in the Desert' against the Turks. In the peace negotiations at the end of the war the principle of self-determination was adopted by the Allies for the nationalities of the Middle East as well as of Europe. All the Arabs were liberated from Turkish sovereignty; but, except for those of the Arabia peninsula, they did not become independent immediately. They were placed—against their will—under the Mandate, or guardianship, of Great Britain and France. The national feeling was not satisfied by this state of tutelage. There were constant troubles in the Mandated territories; and by the end of the Second World War, Iraq, Trans-Jordan, Syria and the Lebanon were independent States. The political development in Palestine was different, and is recorded in the next chapter.

## *Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*

IT is convenient to take as a starting-point of the history of modern Palestine Napoleon's campaign in the Holy Land, 1798-99. That was the beginning of the European invasion or penetration of the Middle East. He had landed in Egypt; and intended to march through Asia to India in order to destroy England's power in the East and build up an Oriental Empire for France. He occupied Cairo, and having routed the army of the Pasha of Egypt at the Battle of the Pyramids, where "40 centuries look down on you", he marched across the Sinai Desert, and along the coast of Palestine. Gaza and Jaffa were occupied. The French Fleet in the meantime had been sunk or captured by Nelson in the Battle of the Nile. With the retreat of his army cut off, Napoleon had to march on with his 15,000 men. He routed another Turkish Army in Galilee under Mt. Tabor, but was held up at the little port-town of Acre. That place had once been the chief harbour of the Crusaders. The "key of the East", as Napoleon called it, was stoutly defended by a small body of English sailors under Sir Sidney Smith. Napoleon had to abandon his enterprise, and leaving his forces—which a year later surrendered to a British Army—managed to return to France. To the end of his life he believed that he missed his destiny by failure at Acre.

Several historians have affirmed that, during his campaign, Napoleon offered to restore Palestine to the Jews. They rely on two statements which appeared in the French official journal, *Moniteur*, in June 1799. The first reported from Constantinople that Bonaparte had issued a proclamation inviting the Jews of Asia and Africa to enlist under his flag and re-establish ancient Jerusalem. He had already armed a large number, and their battalions threatened Aleppo. The second was designed to reassure French readers that Bonaparte's conquest of Syria had not the sole purpose of restoring Jerusalem to the Jews. He had larger plans to march on Constantinople and strike terror from there into Vienna and Petersburg. This strange precursor of the Balfour Declaration,



if it indeed was made, does not appear to have evoked any response. It was a romantic leap in the dark, or perhaps an exercise in propaganda. But from that time the idea of restoring the Jews to Palestine was a factor in Middle East policy.

At the time of Napoleon's invasion Palestine was a wasted and neglected country with a sparse population between 100,000 and 200,000. They were mostly Arabs, but included Jews, Sudan negroes, Circassians, Greeks of the Levant. It was part of the Turkish or Ottoman Empire, which then included all the Middle East and North Africa. It was visited by pilgrims of the Christian Churches; and the Christian religious bodies had built many monasteries, convents and churches in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and other Holy Places. The Orthodox (Greek) and the Latin communities often had rival shrines. Jews from Europe were established in four towns which were regarded as holy by them: Jerusalem and Hebron in the south, Tiberias and Safed in the north. They were engaged in prayer and study, and for the most part lived in wretched material conditions.

Napoleon's campaign attracted the attention of the European Powers to the Middle East. Henceforth the British Government had a constant interest in Egypt and Palestine which were on the way to the Indian Empire. At that time, before the Suez Canal was made, the quick route to India, instead of sailing round Africa, was by sea to Alexandria, then overland to Suez, and thence by sea. When Mohammed Ali, the Albanian Viceroy of Egypt who had fought against Napoleon, made himself an independent ruler, occupied Palestine and Syria, and threatened to march on Constantinople and create an Arab Empire, England felt a danger to her interests. In 1840, therefore, she supported Russia and Austria in checking him. Again her sailors occupied Acre, and held the fort against the Egyptians. Admiral Napier obtained an undertaking from Mohammed Ali to give up Syria on condition that he became the hereditary ruler of Egypt. At that time European statesmen discussed various schemes for the future of the Holy Land; and certain religious groups in England, who had influence with Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister, favoured a policy of opening it to the Jewish people. Lord Shaftesbury, a kinsman of Palmerston, was devoted to that idea. As often before and since, the European Powers could not agree among themselves, and in the end they restored the country to the



Turkish Sultan, stipulating that the non-Moslem population, i.e. Christians and Jews, should enjoy equal rights with the Moslems.

The British Government, under Lord Palmerston, at this stage appointed a Consul in Jerusalem. He was the first European diplomatic representative in the country, and had a mission to protect all the Jews, whether British subjects or foreign. About the same time, too, the British and Prussians together established a Protestant Church in Jerusalem, believing that it would hasten the millennium. Its first head was an Anglican bishop who was of the Jewish race. The other European nations followed the example, appointed consuls in Jerusalem, and began also to compete with each other in the support of rival Churches. The French were traditionally the protectors of the Latin or Roman Catholic Church in the East; the Russians were the protectors and supporters of the Orthodox or Greek-Orthodox Church. The Italians, Austrians and Germans also supported the Latin Church. The conflict between Russia and Western Europe, which is being waged today, was waged in a different form through most of the nineteenth century. It was partly that struggle, and partly the struggle between the Churches, that led to the outbreak of what we call the Crimean War, 1854-56. The immediate cause was a dispute about rights of the Christian Orders in the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. The war was fought almost entirely on Russian territory, but it did bring one important change in Palestine. The Sultan of Turkey issued an edict confirming equal citizenship of all his subjects without distinction of race or creed.

European interest was steadily increasing; and the beginning of European colonization was marked by the coming, in 1870, of groups of German Christians, farmers from Würtemberg who belonged to a sect of Templars. They settled around Jerusalem, Jaffa, Haifa and Nazareth, and established themselves in agriculture and trade. Bringing European order and methods, they did much to redeem corners of the land which they farmed from its waste and desolate conditions. A little later small bodies of Jewish idealists coming from Eastern Europe, from Russia and Roumania, and inspired by a religious faith in restoration of the Jewish nation, settled on the land, and established 'Colonies', i.e. agricultural villages. When they fell into dire straits, because of malaria and other pests and of Arab marauders, the head of the French house of

Rothschild, Baron Edmond, came to the rescue. He was a father to them, and for fifty years gave them munificent help. Fifty villages are an offspring of his vision.

The British interest during the nineteenth century was shown particularly in the scientific exploration and geographical survey of the Bible country. The Palestine Exploration Fund was founded in 1865, and English Army officers of the Royal Engineers engaged by it carried out an underground exploration of Jerusalem and mapped the country. That double activity was a symbol of the combination of Biblical and political interest. Among the officers was Lieut. Herbert Kitchener, who was to become the famous General of the British Army in Egypt and South Africa. Palestine acquired, too, a fresh importance for England when the Suez Canal was constructed to link the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, and to provide a through-sea-route to the East. In the eighties, when there were troubles in Egypt and nationalist riots against Europeans, British military forces occupied that country.

It was important for England to strengthen her position also in the country which was neighbouring to Egypt. Throughout the last part of the nineteenth century, she was extending her trade in Palestine, and she gave her support to Jewish agricultural and urban settlement. She was recognized by the Jews of the world as the most friendly of the Great Powers to their movement for return; and the chief Zionist enterprises were formed as English companies. An English Company for the Euphrates Valley Railway, to run from Haifa to Bagdad, was floated nearly 100 years ago, but the scheme was abandoned. An English company, too, started an enterprise for building a railway from Haifa to Damascus. But it also failed.

The Turkish Government, however, completed the laying of the line, and linked it with another railway, important for strategic purposes, but carried out as a religious undertaking. The professed purpose was to enable Moslem pilgrims from all parts of the Ottoman Empire—and elsewhere—to travel more easily to the Moslem holy cities in the Arabian peninsula. The line, financed by the offerings of the faithful, was designed to run from Damascus to Medina and Mecca. It only got as far as Medina. But it did serve to link the capital of the Empire, Constantinople in Europe, with these remote provinces, Syria, Palestine and Arabia. A smaller but more profitable railway development was a line, built by a French company, from



Jaffa on the coast to Jerusalem, fifty miles away in the hills. It made access to the Holy City much easier for Western visitors; and it was part of a movement of Westernization, which bit by bit was transforming the Middle East.

Other European nations likewise, and particularly Germany, began to spread their influence and multiply their religious establishments in Palestine. For the Germans it was part of the policy known as the Drive to the East. Another part was the project for a Berlin-Bagdad Railway. Kaiser Wilhelm II, who later brought about the First World War, made in 1898 an ostentatious pilgrimage to Turkey and the Holy Land. He proclaimed himself the friend of the Moslems; and his coming to Jerusalem was marked by the foundation in the Holy City of four big German religious institutions, which were disguised fortresses. It was part of the activity of a young English archaeologist, T. E. Lawrence, then digging ancient sites in Asia Minor and in Palestine, to keep an eye on what the Germans were doing, and particularly on the progress of their railway to Bagdad. In the year before the First World War, he and other British officers, following in the footsteps of Kitchener, carried out a survey of the arid southern part of Palestine, in which the Children of Israel had wandered when they came out of Egypt. In that very country he was to achieve fame in the next years as the romantic and fearless leader of an Arab tribal rebellion against the Turks.

In the First World War Turkey, to her own undoing, threw in her lot with the Germans, and in November 1914 her irregular troops marched across the Egyptian frontier from Palestine into Sinai. Thence they attempted invasion of the Suez Canal, but were beaten off. Then, in 1916, the British forces, advancing slowly and methodically from the banks of the Suez Canal, and laying a railway and pipe-lines for water as they went, took the offensive against the Turkish Army in Southern Palestine. In the following year, under the leadership of General Allenby, they captured Gaza, Beersheba, Hebron, Bethlehem and Jaffa—and finally Jerusalem. The keys of the Holy City were handed by the Arab Mayor to the General of the 60th (London) Division on December 7th, 1917. A British Military Administration was established over Southern Palestine. In the autumn of 1918 the British forces, again under Allenby, advanced, routed the Turkish Army, and conquered and occupied the whole country on both sides



of Jordan, and Syria and the Lebanon in the north. The Turks capitulated in November 1918, and all the occupied country remained under British military rule.

During the war the British Government had made two momentous statements of policy. They negotiated with an Arab Moslem Prince, Sherif Hussein, who was the hereditary custodian of the holy cities, Mecca and Medina, for an Arab revolt against the Turks, and promised that in return they would help to establish an independent Arab nation over a great part of the Middle East. A little later, in 1917, after negotiating with Zionist leaders in England, they issued a statement known as the Balfour Declaration, because it was signed by Arthur Balfour, at that time the Foreign Secretary. They favoured the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine, and would use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of that object: "it being clearly understood that nothing should be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine". It was not realized at the time that the two promises would be regarded as in conflict. The promise to the Arabs was designed, and was understood by both contracting parties, to exclude Palestine from the area of Arab independence; but the wording was not clear enough.

England recognized the growth of national feeling of the Arabs. She was sympathetic to it, and sought to use that feeling so as to strengthen her forces against the Turks. The national movement was carried by Western influences to the Middle East. The Arab awakening began to move to action young intellectuals in Syria, Palestine and other Arab countries under Ottoman rule.

At the same time, national feeling was growing among the Jews, and led to the movement of Zionism, which aimed at the re-establishment of the Jewish nation in the land of Israel. The Jews were a remarkable example of fidelity of a people to a land from which they had been physically separated for centuries. They had been dispersed and without a country for 1800 years; but they steadfastly cherished the hope and the faith in restoration to the land of their ancestors. Political Zionism started in 1895, with the publication of a book *The Jews' State*, written by an Austrian Jew of genius, Theodor Herzl. He had been roused to a passionate sense of the Jewish insecurity through the Dreyfus case in France, in which a

charge of treason (later proved false) against a Jewish staff officer provoked a violent outburst of Anti-Semitism. Herzl demanded for the Jewish people a land of their own, where they would be free from attack and insult. As a first step he created a Congress, where representatives of the scattered communities met to consider the building of a national home and the making of a nation.

The first Congress was held at Basle (Switzerland) in 1897, and defined the aim of the movement as "to obtain for the Jewish people in Palestine a home assured by public law". The immediate purpose was to acquire from the Sultan of Turkey, in consideration of a loan to be made by the Zionists, a Charter for colonization in Palestine, and to secure the support of the European Powers for the Jewish settlement. Among the statesmen who were deeply impressed by Herzl was Joseph Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary in England. When the charter for Palestine was refused by the Sultan in 1902, Chamberlain fell in with the suggestions of the Zionist leaders for Jewish colonization in a region near Palestine under British Administration. He gave support for a scientific expedition to explore the possibilities of agricultural settlement in the northern part of the Sinai peninsula, which was within the Egyptian borders and adjoining Southern Palestine. And when that scheme proved abortive, he offered the Zionists an autonomous home in a portion of East Africa under a British Protectorate. Another scientific expedition explored that territory, and gave a not very favourable report. The Zionist Congress declined the offer, which had caused violent controversy. Herzl had died broken-hearted before the decision was taken, and his successors were content to pursue smaller practical enterprises of agricultural and urban settlement in Palestine.

In 1908 there was a revolution in Turkey against the autocratic rule of the Sultan. The 'Young Turks' who seized power at first endeavoured to win the support of the Arab and other nationalities of the Empire by holding out promises of autonomy. But the hope of reforming Ottoman rule was suspended by the outbreak of war, first in African Tripoli, 1911, and then in the Balkans, 1912. The Italians, taking advantage of Turkish difficulties, invaded the African province, and carved out the new Roman Empire of Libya. The Christian nations, Serbia, Greece, Bulgaria and Roumania, which had been liberated from the Ottomans, joined forces to invade the



Turkish territory in Europe. Until the outbreak of the First World War the Turks were hard put to defend their own country. In the World War itself, allied to the Germans, they lost the whole of the Arab provinces. Iraq, then known as Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria were occupied by British forces. Arabia itself became independent.

At the Peace Conference of Paris in 1919, Jewish and Arab representatives both favoured the establishment of a British Trust Administration for Palestine which should prepare the peoples of the country for self-government. That new idea of government was called the System of Mandate—from a Latin legal term for Trust. It was designed to meet the case of peoples who hoped ultimately for self-determination, but were not immediately ready to take full responsibility for their own government; as it was said in the Covenant of the League of Nations, "to stand by themselves in the strenuous conditions of the modern world".

The war had linked Palestine more closely, by road and railway, with Europe, the Middle East and African Egypt. The British Army, as it marched, laid a railway line across the Sinai Desert from the Suez Canal; and after the end of the fighting, carried it along the coastal plain of Palestine to Haifa, to join the branch of the former Turkish railway to Damascus. From Damascus one line ran south, along the edge of the Syrian desert to the heart of Arabia; and another ran north to Aleppo, and thence to the Turkish system in Anatolia. At Kantara, in Egypt, the terminal of the Sinai railway by the Suez Canal, a board used to mark: 'To Jerusalem, Iraq and Asia.' Palestine was again the visible bridge between three continents.

Palestine, instead of being a backward region of the Middle East, henceforth was the most progressive corner. Its population at the end of the First World War, despite great mortality through disease in the last years of the Turks, was about 600,000. Of them the Jewish and the Christian minorities each numbered about 60,000; and the rest were Moslem Arabs. The building of a Jewish city next to Jaffa had begun. Originally a garden suburb, named Tel-Aviv—meaning the Hill of Spring—it was destined to become in thirty years the largest town of Palestine, and one of the largest of the Middle East. Many Jewish rural villages were established, and the settlers were introducing modern methods of agriculture.



The political status of Palestine and the neighbouring lands for two years after the war was indefinite. No treaty of peace was made with Turkey, and the Allies were not agreed among themselves. The delay gave to the Arab national opposition to Zionism the opportunity to grow. At Easter, 1920, which was also a season of Moslem Festivals, Arab bands attacked the Jewish quarters of Jerusalem, and started a series of violent racial outbreaks which continued intermittently for twenty-eight years. The Principal Allied Powers were moved by this and similar outbreaks in other Arab countries to a decision about the allocation of the Mandates. Great Britain received the Mandates for Palestine and Iraq; France for Syria and the Lebanon. Palestine included the country on the east side of the Jordan, up to the Syrian desert.

The contingent promise of self-government for the Arab peoples, given during the war, was whittled away by what seemed to the Arab leaders a betrayal. It was a gross affront to Arab feeling that the unity of the people, recognized even in the Ottoman Empire, was rudely broken by their division between different trustee powers, each importing its system of administration, law, economics and culture. The division, moreover, set up artificial frontiers which hampered trade and intercourse. It was as though Middlesex, Wessex and Sussex had been placed under different foreign rulers. No wonder that both British and French had to face serious troubles at the outset of their trustee rule. Palestine, indeed, was comparatively tranquil for a year. But in Syria and Iraq the demand for self-determination had to be put down by force. And in Egypt also the demand for independence passed to a bloody revolt.

It was in this highly charged atmosphere that the British Civil Administration of Palestine was initiated in the summer of 1920. The Coalition Government of Lloyd George appointed an English Jew, Sir Herbert Samuel, who had been a Liberal Cabinet Minister, as the first High Commissioner for the Mandated territory of Palestine (including Trans-Jordan). The new title was adopted in place of the usual term, Governor, for the new type of Trustee authority. The choice of a Jew marked dramatically the intention of the Government to execute the policy of the Balfour Declaration, which, though not yet formally confirmed by the League of Nations, had been adopted by the Allied Powers as part of a new international

order. It was the first time for 1850 years that a Jew had been ruler in the Land of Israel.

The Arabs of Palestine at first co-operated with the British Administration. The High Commissioner set up an Advisory Council of leading citizens of the three faiths, sitting with the principal officials to discuss affairs of State and fresh legislation. With their approval he introduced radical changes in the administration, and enacted a series of ordinances and laws which fitted Palestine to be a progressive welfare state. Winston Churchill, then Colonial Secretary, came to the Middle East in the Spring of 1921, accompanied by Lawrence of Arabia. At Cairo, and later in Jerusalem, he settled the affairs of the Arab countries to which independence had been promised. Emir Feisal, a son of King Hussein of Mecca, who had been the leader of the Arab revolt in the desert, should be King of Iraq, and his elder brother Abdullah, who had moved from the Arabian peninsula with his desert warriors, threatening to attack the French in Syria, and occupied the country east of Jordan, should be Emir or ruling Prince of Trans-Jordan. He should have financial support from Great Britain, provided he stayed within the borders allotted to him. He accepted the broad directions of the High Commissioner for Palestine, and received a few English advisers and a Frontier Force to keep the peace.

Jewish immigration into Palestine from Europe began. It was on a modest scale; but it was easy for nationalists to fan Arab feeling with the story that the Arab peasants would be deprived of their land by incoming and infidel hordes from the west. On May 1st, 1921, murderous attacks were made on Jewish immigrants at Jaffa, and for a few weeks the country was seething with rebellion. What became a regular rhythm of the Mandatory Administration followed: A Commission of Enquiry on the spot, re-examination of the policy in London, and then a statement by the British Government. The attempt was made to remove excessive Arab fears, and to check excessive Jewish hopes, by an interpretation of the Balfour Declaration.

"The Jewish National Home" (it was said) "was not the imposition of a Jewish nationality upon the inhabitants of Palestine as a whole, but the development of the existing Jewish community, with the assistance of Jews in other parts of the world, in order that it may become a centre



in which the Jewish people may take an interest and a pride. . . . It is essential that it should know that it is in Palestine of right and not on sufferance."

The statement did not remove the opposition of the Arab national leaders, particularly of a Moslem ecclesiastic, the Mufti of Jerusalem, who was implacable, and who for thirty years organized trouble in the Middle East. At his instigation the Arabs refused to take part in the election of members to a Legislative Council; and the Palestine Administration was carried on by the High Commissioner as a benevolent autocracy.

Yet for a period of seven years, 1922-29, Palestine enjoyed peaceful progress. Lord Balfour, the author of the Declaration about the Jewish National Home, visited the country in 1925, to open the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. By that time the Jewish population had been doubled since the beginning of the British Mandate, through immigration. And the Arab population was increasing nearly as rapidly because of the improved conditions of life and health. Schools were opened by the Palestine Government for Arabs at the rate of one a week, while the Jews developed their own educational system. The exports of the country were doubled, and a modern harbour was constructed at Haifa.

In 1925, Sir Herbert Samuel was succeeded as High Commissioner by Field-Marshal Lord Plumer, a famous soldier of the First World War, and during his three years of office there was no disturbance. It looked in 1928 as if the policy of fostering co-operation between Arabs and Jews, till the two peoples were ready for self-government in a bi-national state, would be successful. Each year the British Administration gave an account of its stewardship to an international body set up by the League of Nations and known as the Permanent Mandates Commission; each year it could report steady improvement. A representative Jewish body, also, the Jewish Agency for Palestine, presented to the Commission a report on the measures taken to build up the National Home.

In 1929, a small cloud appeared in the sky, and grew rapidly to a raging storm. It gathered over a religious conflict between Jews and Moslems about the Jewish right of worship at one of the holy places of Jerusalem, which was part of the Wall of the ancient Temple and was in Moslem ownership. The deeper cause, however, was renewed Arab fear of dis-



possession by Jewish immigrants. As in 1921, outbreaks spread like wildfire all over the country. A Labour Government was in office in England; and though the party was generally sympathetic to the Jews who were establishing a socialist way of life in Palestine, it adopted the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry, which inquired into the riots, for restricting Jewish immigration and settlement on the land.

Events in Europe soon forced, however, more rapid and thorough development of the National Home. At the beginning of 1933, Hitler and the Nazis seized power in Germany, and proceeded to enforce ruthless persecution of the 500,000 Jews then living in the country. Jews were excluded from every form of public and professional life, and it was clear that the young generation would have to emigrate and find new homes. It was a hard time for emigration. Nearly all the globe was in the trough of the economic crisis, and the countries of the New World and the old closed their gates to refugees. Palestine was the one land to which the Jews could turn and make opportunity for settlement. The immigration leapt up: in 1933, 30,000; in 1934, 45,000; in 1935, nearly 70,000. If it continued at this pace, the Palestine Arabs in a few years would be a minority. Again they burst out into a rebellion; and this time their resistance was more serious and sustained. For six months in 1936 they kept up a civil warfare, till the heads of the neighbouring Arab States induced a lull in order to allow another Commission of Inquiry to come out from England, explore the causes and suggest a remedy. This time it was a Royal Commission.

The report contained radical proposals. The idea of a bi-national Arab-Jewish Palestine should be abandoned, because each people insisted on independence and would not co-operate. So the little land should be partitioned into three political areas; a tiny Jewish State, mostly in the coastal plain, where the Jews had the towns of Tel-Aviv and Haifa and their agricultural settlements; an Arab region in the hill country, which would be joined with the Emirate of Trans-Jordan, and finally, a remnant of the British Mandate area, under British rule, to include Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Nazareth, the Holy Towns, a corridor from Jerusalem to the sea, and the then unpopulated area of the Negev.

The plan, at first approved, was soon abandoned, by the British Government; but its main ideas were to exercise later a

decisive influence. The Jews were prepared to consider the solution, but the Arabs violently resisted, and egged on by Nazi and Fascist agents resumed their revolt. The critical state of the world in the next years, 1938-39, forced the British Government to placate the Arab peoples so as to assure, in case of world war, a foothold for British forces in the Middle East. Failing in half-hearted attempts to get an agreed policy, it issued in May 1939 a unilateral statement of policy which further restricted Jewish development. The Mandate should be given up, and an independent, predominantly Arab, Palestine would be established after ten years. In the meantime Jewish immigration and Jewish purchase of land from Arabs would be severely limited. Only in one-twentieth part of the tiny land might they buy it. The blow was the harder for the Jews because the Hitler persecution was extended over Central Europe, and was becoming more and more pitiless. The need of a refuge for tens of thousands was more urgent than ever. An extremist Jewish group, frenzied with despair, and believing that the British would make concessions only to force, resorted to terrorism.

The first year of the Second World War, however, paradoxically brought relative peace to Palestine. It put an end to the three years of Arab revolt, and checked Jewish agitation against the Government. The Jews in the National Home, recognizing that the fight against Hitler was a condition of their survival, offered a Jewish volunteer army to fight with the Allies. The British Government, afraid of Arab reactions, would not accept the offer till the latter part of the war, but permitted Jews and Arabs to enlist in special units of the British forces. Jewish manpower, industry and science were marshalled for the war effort, and made Palestine an important arsenal. The Palestinian Arabs, though less whole-hearted for the Allied cause, were quiet, and only a few responded to the call of the Mufti of Jerusalem, the arch-enemy alike of the Jews and the English, for a holy war in alliance with the Nazis.

Yet politically the internal tension was unbroken. The independent Arab states—Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Trans-Jordan, Iraq and Arabia—towards the end of the World War, formed a league for mutual help, and had as one of their principal aims the independence of Arab Palestine. The Jews, stricken by the massacre of 6,000,000 of their people in Europe, demanded free immigration into Palestine after the war, and



as a means to that the establishment of a Jewish State. It made for Arab intransigence that during the war independence was given to the two neighbouring countries, Syria and the Lebanon, that had been under a French Mandate. It made for Jewish intransigence that, while throughout the war the extermination of Jews by the Nazis was carried out in Europe, and nearly every family in Palestine was mourning its kin, the gates of Palestine remained barred, even to a few boat-loads of fugitives. The American Jewish Community, far the largest in the world, —over 5,000,000 as against 600,000 in Palestine—was now ranged in the demand for unlimited immigration, and exercised pressure on the Government of the United States to secure this right.

When the war ended, the English Labour Party, which before and during its course had been outspokenly opposed to the restrictive policy of immigration, came into power. The Jewish leaders were confident that it would immediately open the door to the survivors in the displaced persons' camps of Europe. They were disappointed. The British Government, still concerned for security in the Middle East, tarried and surveyed the position afresh. Yet another Commission came to the land of inquests; this time it was half English, half American; and its report was addressed to the two Governments. The United Nations Organization was not yet fully constituted, and the future of Palestine was treated as a joint care of the Anglo-Saxon Powers. The Commission, after taking evidence in Europe, Palestine and the Arab countries, unanimously recommended large Jewish immigration and removal of the impediments to Jewish purchase of land, but the maintenance for a period of British Trustee administration. Its report, issued in May 1946, was followed not by action but by recrimination between the two Powers. The Jews were driven to organize attempts to defeat the exclusion of immigrants and to break the British blockade of the Palestine coast. A more violent element renewed the terrorist campaign.

An unhappy year was spent in fruitless conferences in Palestine and in London, and in violent acts which were met by violent repression. Then in 1947, the British Government turned to the United Nations for counsel and for a solution of what had become a hopeless deadlock. One more Commission must come and go through the thankless toil of investigation. This time it was an international body, without a member



from England or any of the Great Powers of the United Nations. The report of the majority recommended partition of the country into Jewish and Arab States, and a Trustee Administration of the United Nations for the city of Jerusalem which should be a meeting-place of the two States.

If the political record of the last ten years of the Mandate was marked by frustration and despair, turmoil and strife, the economic and social record was marked by achievement, and by a development such as the country had not known for centuries. During the thirty years of British rule, the population of Palestine was nearly trebled, and rose to nearly 1,800,000. Roughly two-thirds were Arabs, whose numbers were doubled by natural fertility; one-third were Jews who multiplied tenfold, mainly by immigration. The population of Tel-Aviv had grown to nearly 200,000, and of Haifa to 150,000. More than any country in the Middle East, Palestine possessed a skilled industrial population coming from Europe, and many factories were established. Electric power was generated, partly by a hydro-electric scheme using the fall of the Jordan and Yarmuk rivers, and partly by fuel stations. A large oil-refinery was built by the Iraq Petroleum Company at Haifa, which was the outlet of a pipe-line from the oil-fields of Iraq. The minerals in solution in the Dead Sea, potash, bromide and magnesium, were extracted to become a source of fertilizers and a valuable reservoir of chemicals for the Western Powers during the war. Agriculture had been greatly developed by both Arabs and Jews; and the export of citrus fruit had risen from a million cases to 15,000,000, till in 1939 it was checked by the war. Jewish agriculture and industry were organized through a system of voluntary socialism. A Labour Federation included over 150,000 adult members, formed partly in collective groups, partly in co-operative societies and Trade Unions.

The cultural life moved forward in step with the economic development. The expulsion of Jews from Europe brought many talents, intellectual and artistic, who gave a great impulse to science, literature and the arts. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem was a beacon of scholarship and science for the Middle East. A splendid museum of Archaeology was built in Jerusalem. A Symphony Orchestra was formed from exiled musicians. So at the end of the British rule, Palestine, though a country of strife and violent passions, remained a land of promise and constructive energy.

*The Republic of Israel*

**I**N the Spring of 1947, a Special Assembly of the United Nations was convened, at the request of the British Government, to consider the future of Palestine, which had been administered under the Mandate. The Assembly appointed a Special Commission on Palestine, which at once visited the country, and reported in September to the annual Assembly of the United Nations.

The Commission was composed of eleven members, representatives of States other than the Great Powers. There was a delegate from Canada and from Australia, but not from the United Kingdom. The Commission was unanimous that the British Mandate should be brought to an end as soon as possible. It was divided about the political position of the country when it became independent. The majority recommended that Palestine should be partitioned into an Arab State and a Jewish State. The city of Jerusalem would not be included in either State, but would be placed for a term of years under the Trusteeship of the United Nations itself. The Jewish and the Arab States should be combined in an economic union for a common policy of customs duties, agricultural development and communications. A Commissioner of the United Nations would be responsible for the guardianship of the Holy Places of all the religious communities, and would ensure freedom of access to them. The minority recommended that there should be a single Federal State, Jews and Arabs enjoying a large measure of autonomy in their regions, and with Jerusalem as the Federal capital.

The Assembly on November 29th, 1947, adopted, with some amendment, the plan of the majority. The plan gave to each nation about half of the area of Western Palestine, and left a considerable Arab minority in the territory allotted to the Jewish State, and a small Jewish minority in the Arab territory of autonomy. The Assembly called on the Mandatory Power to assist in carrying out the decision of the majority, and appointed a small international committee which should co-operate with the Mandatory in preparing for the transfer of authority to the new States.



The plan of the United Nations, apart from the resolution for ending the Mandate, was still-born. The British Government made it clear from the outset that it would take no steps to implement any decision which was not acceptable to both parts of the population. And as it was certain that the Arabs would not accept the resolution of the Assembly, that meant that it would not help to enforce the solution. At the same time, the other States showed themselves unwilling to take responsibility for enforcing their resolutions. The Mandatory Government announced that it would leave the country in six months, and withdraw its remaining troops within three months after that time. In fact, it shortened the term. The British civil authorities were finally withdrawn on May 14th, and the last British troops left Haifa by July 1st, 1948.

The last six months of the Mandate were a period of chaos. Within two days of the voting of the Assembly in November 1947, the Arabs started violent resistance in Jerusalem and other places. The States of the Arab League announced that they would fight the partition of Palestine to the bitter end. Bands of irregular Arab troops from those States began to infiltrate into Palestine, and joined with Palestinian Arabs in attacking the Jewish urban quarters and rural settlements. The Jews retaliated; and though the forces on both sides were illegal—according to the Law of the Mandatory Authority which claimed to be responsible for law and order—and although British troops occasionally interfered when the position became very grave, no sustained attempt was made by the British Administration either to put down the civil war or to hand over authority to Jewish and Arab bodies. And the Committee which the United Nations had appointed to co-operate in these measures was not invited to Palestine. A final effort of the United Nations and the Mandatory to neutralize Jerusalem in the impending conflict between Jews and Arabs failed.

The Jews, however, were prepared for decisive action. Their leaders had announced that they would proclaim the Jewish State immediately the Mandate ended. They were as good as their word. On the evening of Friday, May 14th, 1948, the National Council assembled in Tel-Aviv under the Chairmanship of David Ben Gurion, representing both the Jewish people in Palestine and the World Zionist Movement. "By virtue of the natural and historic right of the Jewish people



and the resolution of the Assembly of the United Nations", they proclaimed the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine to be called Israel.

"The State of Israel will be open to the immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel; will uphold the social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of religion, race or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter."

The Arab inhabitants should enjoy equal rights, and an appeal was made to them to live in peace with the Jews.

In the next days, the United States and the Soviet Union, strangely allied in this matter, as they had been in the majority policy at the Assembly, granted *de facto* recognition to the new State of Israel. A Council of Government, comprising representatives of almost all the political parties, was nominated with Mr. David Ben Gurion, the leader of the Labour Party, as the Premier. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who had been for many years President of the World Zionist Organization and was the principal architect of the Jewish National Home, was chosen as President of the Provisional Council of State. Dr. Weizmann was by origin a Russian Jew, but had lived in England for over forty years, and pursued in face of many disappointments a policy of co-operation with the British Government. An eminent scientist, he had been Reader in Chemistry at Manchester University, and by his scientific research had made a notable contribution to the English war-effort in the First World War. It was he who at that time won the support of the British Government for Zionist aims, and brought about the issue by it of the Balfour Declaration in 1917.

On the day following the Proclamation of the Republic of Israel, the rulers of seven Arab States, Members of the Arab League, announced that they would march into the territory to restore order and rescue the Arab population. Straightway the regular Armies of the neighbours of Israel—Egypt, Syria,

Lebanon and Trans-Jordan—moved across the frontiers laid down in the decision of the United Nations. They were joined later by forces from Iraq and by token support from Saudi Arabia and Yemen. It seemed inevitable that the small, ill-equipped volunteer force of Israel known as Hagana—that is, defence—would be overwhelmed. That did not happen. The army and civil population of Israel had faith and courage, unity of purpose and of command; and every man realized that he was fighting for the life of the people.

The United Nations having failed to prevent war was concerned to bring about a cessation of hostilities, in accordance with the principles of the Charter. It appointed a Mediator and observer, Count Folke Bernadotte of Sweden, who had done distinguished service for humanity as President of the Swedish Red Cross during the Second World War. He came out at once to the Middle East, and by his energy, patience and resourcefulness negotiated with the Arab States and Israel a cease-fire or truce, after the fighting had been waged for twenty-six days. The first truce was made for four weeks. The Jews agreed, but the Arabs refused, to prolong it. Hostilities started again on July 9th. This time they lasted for ten days only, because the Jews in that short time routed the Arab forces and made themselves masters of the greater part of Western Palestine. Count Bernadotte brought about a second cease-fire which was, however, frequently violated by one side or the other. The Jews continued to have the advantage whenever fighting was resumed; and by the end of 1948, they had occupied all of Galilee in the north, and nearly all the Negev in the south.

Count Bernadotte was assassinated in Jerusalem by Jewish terrorists, but his place as Mediator was taken by his principal lieutenant, Dr. Ralph Bunche, an American negro who had been the secretary of the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine. Bunche proved himself a negotiator of extraordinary skill—he was subsequently awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace—and by his patient efforts delegates of four Arab States in turn were induced to meet the delegates of Israel, and draw up terms of Armistice to replace the cease-fire agreements. The first of these Armistice Agreements was made with Egypt in February 1949. It was followed by an Armistice with the Lebanon in March, with Trans-Jordan in April, and with Syria in July 1949. Iraq withdrew her forces without any formal agreement.



Before the Armistice Agreements were made, the Government of Israel had taken steps for the election of a Constituent Assembly which was designed to examine and adopt a draft democratic Constitution. It organized a census for the purpose of drawing up an electoral roll. All persons of eighteen years or over, who had resided in Israel at least three months, without distinction of sex or nationality, had a vote. The Assembly was elected in January 1949, by adult suffrage and a system of proportional representation. The whole country formed a single constituency; and the hundred and twenty seats in the Chamber were divided between the different parties according to their proportion of the total number of votes cast. Twenty-one parties contested the election. The two largest were branches of Labour and of the Labour Federation; the central group, called Mapai,<sup>1</sup> with a Social-Democrat outlook like that of the British Labour Party, and a Left-Wing Group, Mapam,<sup>1</sup> which was more extreme and in foreign affairs favoured association with the Soviet Union. The third largest party was of the United Religious groups, which demanded that the State of Israel be regulated by Jewish religious Law. A small Communist Party, of Jews and Arabs combined, won three seats; and Arab parties also won three seats.

A draft Constitution had been published before the election for the consideration of the electors. It included provisions for a system of social security and also for the institution of a centralized democracy. Sovereign powers were vested in a single Chamber of Deputies (Knesset) to which the Ministers were responsible. The Coalition Government, however, formed after the election by Mr. Ben Gurion, decided that they would proceed more cautiously with a Constitution. Following English principles, they should let it grow as experience dictated. They enacted then only a 'Little Organic law', which gave the minimum basis: defining the functions of the Legislative Council, the President of the State and the Executive Government. Dr. Weizmann was elected the first President of the Republic, and held that office till his death in 1952. He was succeeded by another Jew of Russian origin, Mr. Isaac Ben-Zvi, a Socialist leader and a scholar.

The first Assembly was converted into a single-chamber

<sup>1</sup> The names are derived from the initial Hebrew letters of the titles of the Parties.





*Top: Jerusalem: Mount Zion and Walls. Dormitium Church top centre. Below the walls runs the Valley of Hinnom (See Ch. VI)*



*Centre: Place of the Temple. Dome of the Rock built over the rock of the Altar and (right) Mosque of El Aksa (See Ch. VI)*

*Bottom: Mount Scopus. Buildings of Hebrew University. (Extreme top right: British War Cemetery. The whole area including the buildings is a Jewish enclave in Arab territory and since 1948 cannot be used by the University.) (See Ch. VI)*





*Top:* Haifa and Haifa Bay from Mount Carmel. The new city is built on the slopes of the mountain  
*Bottom:* Allenby Street, Tel Aviv. One of the busy thoroughfares in the largest city in Israel



*Above:* Independence Street (formerly Kingsway), Haifa. This street is on land reclaimed from the sea when the British built the harbour

(See Ch. VII)



Parliament, and during the two and a half years of its life passed three major laws, in addition to many measures of taxation and administration. The laws dealt with the right of every Jew to come to the homeland, free compulsory elementary education, and compulsory national service. They are three instruments for the integration of the people in the life of the State. The right of return is designed to end the dispersion, particularly in Oriental lands. The elementary school is the place where the children, coming from every part of the world, and speaking a babel of tongues, mingle together and acquire Hebrew as the common language. National Service, which requires the young woman as well as the young man to give two years—later extended to two and a half years—to work on the land and military training, welds together the adult population, and is also a form of adult education.

The second Assembly was elected in the Summer of 1951, after the first Coalition Government of the Central Labour Party, the Religious Bloc and the Progressives—a small Liberal group—had broken up. It passed another fundamental law, about Israel nationality. The law confers that nationality straightway on Jews who immigrate, but allows for double nationality if the immigrant does not wish to renounce his previous citizenship. Arabs resident in Israel can acquire it under certain conditions. The second Coalition Government was in its original composition similar to the first. But after renewed difficulties between the Labour Party and the Religious Bloc, the Prime Minister, Ben Gurion, brought in the party of the General Zionists, the second largest in the Knesset, who represented the bourgeois element and stood for individual enterprise. Their principal legislative achievement in the first year was the reform of the public education system, so as to provide for a single kind of public school.

Israel became a member of the United Nations shortly after the Armistice Agreements were made with Egypt and Jordan. She was admitted by vote of the Security Council and the Assembly in May 1949. In her international relations she pursues the policy of non-identification or non-alignment with either of the two contending groups of States, the Western and the People's Democracies. Nevertheless, the Coalition Government broadly co-operates with the Western Democracies, and receives from the United States substantial grants-in-aid for the development of the country and the settlement of



immigrants. The efforts of the United Nations, through a Conciliation Commission appointed in 1949, to help Israel and the Arab States negotiate terms of peace have hitherto failed, because the Arab States are unwilling to recognize the fact of an independent Israel, and to sit down at a table with Israel.

The growth of the population of Israel, during the few years that the State has existed, is phenomenal. It has more than doubled the number of Jews who were in the territory in May 1948. At some periods the immigrants arrived at the rate of 1000 a day; and in the year 1949, the total immigration approached a quarter of a million. The bulk of the Arabs who were living in the territory before 1948 fled during the war, and are mostly refugees living in the neighbouring Arab States. The quarters of the towns, the villages and lands which they abandoned have been settled by the incoming Jews. Out of the former Arab population of 900,000, 180,000 only have remained in Israel.

The war between the Arab States and Israel brought about a violent transfer of population similar to that which happened at the end of the First World War, when 2,000,000 Greeks were driven from their homes in Asia Minor by the victorious Turks and found asylum in the Kingdom of Greece. It is similar also to the transfer of Hindus and Moslems between India and Pakistan after the partition of that sub-Continent, a year before the partition of Palestine. While three-quarters of a million Arabs fled from the territory of Israel and are refugees in the neighbouring Arab countries, between 300,000 and 400,000 Jews, who were living in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa, have come to the Land of Israel and established their homes.

The first wave of Jewish immigration into Israel came from Europe, particularly from Central and South-Eastern Europe. They were the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps and of the displaced Jewish population torn by the Nazis from their homes in Poland, Roumania, etc. Jews of the Soviet Union were not allowed to emigrate; and after some time the Communist Governments in the satellite countries on the other side of the 'iron curtain' made difficulties for their Jews to leave. In the last three years, then, the emigration from Eastern Europe has been very restricted, and the principal wave has been from the Orient. The Jewish communities in the Arab countries, in Yemen, Iraq and Syria, and in Egypt and North Africa,

represented old Jewish dispersions. Some of them dated back over 2000 years. The Jews lived in fairly happy relations with their Moslem neighbours, although they were treated as second-class citizens, and, like other non-Moslems, suffered certain disabilities. But with the surge of nationalism among both Arabs and Jews, and with the outbreak of war between the Arab States and Israel, their position became precarious. The insecurity on the one hand, and a Messianic yearning for return to the Holy Land on the other, led to the exodus of whole communities to Israel from the Yemen in Southern Arabia, from Iraq, Syria and the Lebanon. Smaller groups came from Egypt and Turkey, Persia and India.

A trickle also of Jews from the Western Democracies, Great Britain, the United States, France, Belgium and Holland, is attracted to the State of Israel. It is composed partly of idealist youth, partly of older persons who feel the call to take their part in a constructive enterprise. During 1952 and 1953 the rate of immigration was greatly reduced—to about one-tenth of the figures of 1951.

The absorption of the immigrant mass is a continual strain on the economy of the tiny State, which has very limited natural resources and has to maintain large military forces in readiness. It is carried out in part by a system of temporary or transit villages, which are erected in all parts of the country and receive the able-bodied immigrants immediately on their arrival. They provide rough accommodation in huts and tents, gradually replaced by more permanent housing. Those newcomers who have not a skilled trade or a calling, to which they can turn, are employed in public works, building roads, afforesting the hills, digging irrigation channels, etc. The Government of Israel aim to make the country as far as possible self-supporting in food, and for this purpose a programme of agricultural settlement on the land abandoned by the Arabs is systematically executed. Roughly one-quarter of the Jewish population is settled in rural areas; and modern methods of mechanized agriculture and schemes of irrigation are being rapidly introduced.

At the same time, industry absorbs the greater part of the old and the new inhabitants. In the period of the Mandate the Jews developed a vast co-operative organization of agriculture, industry and transport, without the intervention of the State, by the free-will of the workers themselves. The principal



building and contracting enterprises, many of the bigger factories, and almost all the internal transport are controlled by one comprehensive Labour Federation. Included in it are a multiplicity of co-operative and collective societies, for agricultural settlement, marketing, credit, housing, etc. That organization remains in the State of Israel; and is the most powerful political and economic element of the country. Nevertheless, the Socialist Government is concerned to attract private enterprise and private investment, particularly for every kind of industry. It realizes, and the Jewish people realize, that the task of ingathering the dispersed in the land of Israel can be accomplished only by a partnership of the Jewish communities of the world with the Government, and by a combination of socialist and individualist economy.

Substantial relief of Israel's strained economy has come since 1952 from another quarter. An agreement was made between the Government of Israel and the (Western) German Federal Republic for the payment of reparations by Germany on account of Hitler's destruction of millions of Jews and the forced migration of thousands who have been settled in Israel. In the autumn of 1951, the German Chancellor Adenauer declared that his Government was anxious to negotiate with Israel for the payment of material compensation for the wrongs done by the Nazis. In the following year delegates of the two States met in Holland, and an agreement was ultimately signed in Luxembourg. Israel put forward a total claim for one and a half billion dollars, of which one billion was due from Western Germany and the rest from the Eastern Zone. The Federal Government agreed in the end to the payment of a sum of over 800,000,000 dollars over a period of twelve years. The payment is being made in the goods of Israel's choice. Germany in this way will supply a substantial part of the capital goods and the raw materials, steel, iron, etc., that Israel needs for the absorption and settlement of the immigrants who were victims of Nazi oppression.

Conditions of life for all the inhabitants of Israel are hard; prices are continually rising, and the housing is still inadequate for the newcomers. What is lacking in physical comfort is compensated by the lively cultural activity. Literature, music and the other arts flourish. The building of the nation has released all manner of intellectual and artistic energies, and all classes enjoy the sense of taking part in a creative enter-



prise. They are acquiring a new way of life and a new language as well as a new home, and above all they are captains of their souls. Though only a section belong to the religious parties and are observant of the traditional law of Judaism, the mass have a conviction that the return is a fulfilment of the Messianic prophecies.

One of the remarkable cultural achievements of the Jewish return to the land has been the revival of Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, as the living tongue of the people. In a single generation a half-dead language of prayer, learning and literature has been transformed into a spoken tongue, used for the expression of every branch of thought and for every activity, and inspiring a varied literature. That result is due to a combination of idealism with practical necessity. Hebrew is the link between the Jewish past, present and future; and the groups of Jews coming to Israel from all parts of the world needed a common language.

They spoke different tongues in their native lands. Those from Central and Eastern Europe spoke Yiddish, which is basically a German dialect of the Middle Ages, but written in Hebrew characters. Those from the Mediterranean countries spoke a Spanish dialect, Ladino, which was brought from Spain when the Jews were expelled in the fifteenth century, and also written in Hebrew script. Those coming from the Moslem countries spoke Arabic. The smaller groups from Western Europe and the Anglo-Saxon countries brought French, German or English. Nearly all of them knew some Hebrew, and so Hebrew was the natural language for Israel. Every form of literature and journalism in it flourishes. It helped this remarkable development that in the Mandatory Administration Hebrew was recognized as one of the three official languages, with English and Arabic. The Laws and Regulations of Government were published in it, and it was used as a language of pleading in the Courts. Necessity has been the mother of invention of new words.

Israel is a creative society, brimming with faith and energy, as it is brimming with material and economic problems and spiritual difficulties. The mass of the people believe that this is the hour of their nation's destiny. To weld the diverse groups together is a great task of social engineering. But the strong bonds of the past, the common pride in the present, and the common faith in the future, are powerful unifying forces.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Jerusalem*

**I**N 1953 the people of Israel celebrated the three thousandth anniversary of Jerusalem as a Jewish city. The period is reckoned from the year when David captured the stronghold from the Jebusites, and made it the capital of the Kingdom of Judah. The date may not be exact, but it is near enough. And we can still picture that exploit in spite of the countless destructions of Jerusalem. David's men under Joab scaled a subterranean water-course or gutter to take the fortress, as it is recorded in the Bible (2 Sam. v, 6 & 7; and 1 Chr. ii, 6). Then David built 'round about'; and the bastion, Millo, which he constructed, is there to see almost unchanged. It was uncovered by an archaeological expedition in the early years of the British Mandate, and is a national monument.

The world tends today to think of Jerusalem as a shrine of the three universal monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The followers of the three faiths look to it as a Holy City. But in its early history it was a site for a fortress, chosen in that bare limestone plateau of Judea because of its natural strength and of the springs which burst from the rock, and which are still there. It has a dramatic setting on the plateau, on the edge of a wide platform, 2500 feet above the Mediterranean, thirty miles away to the west, and nearly 4000 feet above the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley, twenty miles away on the east. Jerusalem is cut off on three sides from the surrounding country by sheer ravines. Four small rocky peaks rise close together on the plateau. Three of them have become famous in literature and in religious song: Zion, Moriah and Olivet—the Mount of Olives. The fortress of the Jebusites, captured by David, was not on any of these, but on a lower knoll called Ophel—that means a hump.

Five hundred years before David took the citadel of the Jebusites, the site of Ophel was occupied by the Egyptians. The diplomatic correspondence of the Pharaohs of the fifteenth century B.C., which was unearthed fifty years ago in Egypt in excavation of the capital of the reforming Akhenaton,

includes a letter, in cuneiform script, to the Foreign Office of Egypt from the Governor of Jerusalem (Urusalim). The Governor was in trouble, and wrote:

"Behold this land of the City of Urusalim; no man aids me, no tribe supports me. Lo, it is done to me as was done to M and the sons of L who have given the King's land to the Habiri."

Some ingenious scholars think that the Habiri are the Hebrews who were invading the land at this time under Joshua. But it was the Jebusites who occupied the fortress when the Egyptian power declined: "and the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem" (Jos. i, 21). The Hebrews occupied the plateau around the fortress; and it may be that the Hebrew name, Yerushalaïm, which is a dual form, refers to twin cities that existed then, as they exist again today.

In 1953, by one of those fortunate incidents that constantly occur in the land where willy-nilly you tread on history, evidence came to light of an Egyptian and Philistine occupation of Jerusalem in the twelfth century B.C., some 200 years before King David's capture. A teacher of agriculture in a school of a suburb of the city took his children to the school's experimental plot. The children were removing stones from the top soil when he observed a 'funny' stone. It turned out to be a chipped scarab with a seal deeply cut and legible. The seal bore the cartouche of a Pharaoh of the twentieth Dynasty. The founder of that dynasty, as we know from Egyptian inscriptions, defeated 'the people of the Sea', who are believed to be the Philistines. He settled them in the southern part of the land, which for 2000 years has borne their name. The seal may have belonged to one of the officers of this Philistine colony; for it was found in the Vale of Rephaim where King David defeated the Philistines and crushed their power, so that they never appeared again in Jerusalem.

The expedition that uncovered David's Fort uncovered also on the same Hill of Ophel the ruins of a synagogue of the first century of the Christian era. A Greek inscription named the builder, Theodotus, son of Vettienus, and mentioned that the hospice, chambers and bathroom attached were for the use of Jews from abroad. It is the only Jerusalem Synagogue—



indeed the only synagogue in Palestine—of which we have trace, of the period before the destruction of the Temple. The name of the founder's father is Roman, and suggests that the father was a freed slave, who took the master's name. We know that many such freedmen in that age of a vigorous Jewish mission to the Gentiles became Jews. It has been suggested that Vettienus was a famous money-changer, referred to in a letter of Cicero, and the Synagogue is that of the Freedmen referred to in the Acts of the Apostles (vi, 9). Be this as it may, the inscription shows that the synagogue in the first century was a place of study as well as worship, and attached to it were hostels and bath-house.

The City of David was built around the spring of pure water that burst forth by the Kidron—or Jehosophat—Valley under the scarp of the hill. The spring has been called by the Christians for centuries the Virgin's Fountain. A subterranean passage runs from it below part of the Holy City to another spring, Siloah, of which Milton wrote: "Siloah's brook that flows fast by the oracle of God." There is no doubt as to the time and the way in which the tunnel was constructed. The Bible records that it was made in the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah (c. 700 B.C.), during the invasion of his Kingdom by Sennacherib with his Assyrian Army. Of that invasion another English poet, Byron, wrote his famous ode: "The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold."

King Hezekiah built the tunnel to carry the waters from the spring, which lay outside the walls of his fortress capital, to the enclosure of the city, so that those within might have to drink, and the invaders might not cut off the life of the defenders. A tablet, 2700 years old, was discovered some seventy years ago in the tunnel, and records the actual making of the tunnel. The inscription in Hebrew runs thus:

"Behold, the boring is completed. While the excavators were lifting up the pick each towards his fellow, and while there were three cubits yet to be bored, there was heard the voice of one calling to another, for there was a crevice in the rock. They rose up, they struck on the west of the boring, pick to pick, and the waters flowed from the source to the pool for one thousand two hundred cubits. And three quarters of a cubit was the height of the rock above the heads of the stone-cutters."

The inscription records simply and touchingly the joy of the two working parties, approaching from the two ends of the tunnel, at the success of their work.

After David's ramp and the tunnel of Hezekiah, the most certain relics of antiquity in Jerusalem are parts of the walls of King Solomon's Temple. Mount Moriah, which is the Temple Mount, was levelled by King Solomon with the labour of tens of thousands of men, so that it had no longer the appearance of a hill. On the huge square platform he built a sanctuary, which was the pride and glory of the people of Israel, and was counted by the Gentiles as one of the Wonders of the World. A part of the outer wall of his Temple and of the two later Temples—one built after the return from the captivity of Babylon, and the other by King Herod in the first century before the Christian era—is a famous Holy Place. There through the ages the Jews have come to pray; and it is known as the Jews' Wailing Place. They themselves, call it more simply The Western Wall. (Since 1948 they have been excluded from it.) Apart from this Wall, the whole of what was the Temple area is a Moslem Shrine, and is called by the Arabs Haram Es-Sherif, meaning, the Noble Sacred Place.

In the deep ravine of the Kidron, below the eastern wall of the Temple area, are a group of ornate tombs, which date from the last century of Jewish independence. When they destroyed the Temple and the Palace of Herod, the Romans left these monuments to the dead. In the Middle Ages the most impressive of them were ascribed to famous characters of the Bible, Absalom the son of King David, and Zachariah, the Prophet. But in our time the archaeologists, more sensitive to styles and periods, have proved that they belong to a much later age, when Hellenistic influences were powerful. In the last century the archaeologists restored to view other famous sepulchres of that first century of the Christian era. They had been buried for ages beneath mounds of rubble and ruin from the Roman destruction. Those who found this group of sculptured tombs thought that they were the burial-place of the Kings of Judah. More critical examination has shown that they pertain to a royal house of a later age. They are probably the tombs of the family of the Queen Helena of Adiabene, a principate of Mesopotamia. The rulers adopted Judaism in the first century A.D., when Jews were ardent missionaries in the Middle East. Josephus, the Jewish historian



of the first century, tells how the Queen venerated Jerusalem, and built there for herself and her sons tombs with pyramids (*Antiquities*, Bk. xx, Ch. 5). The pyramids have disappeared; the tombs remain.

Not far from the 'Tombs of the Kings' another group of sculptured tombs in the classical style have long borne the more apt title of the Tombs of the Judges. Tradition and truth are here at one. For these are the burial-places of famous Rabbis of the Sanhedrin, the supreme tribunal of the Jewish state in the days when the religious law was also the civil law. The tombs have given the name of Sanhedria to a growing quarter of Jewish Jerusalem in the north-east, which suffered much in the siege of 1948, being then a kind of no man's land. Beyond Sanhedria, again to the north-east, and at present within the area of Arab Jerusalem, is a rock-hewn tomb traditionally ascribed to Simon the Just, one of the famous Jewish sages of the third century before the Christian era, the time of Alexander's conquests. He was among the founders of the Great Synagogue which preceded the Sanhedrin as the seat of authority. It is about him that the writer of *Ecclesiasticus*, the book of the Apocrypha, wrote eloquently (Ch. 1):

"It was Simon, the son of Onias, the great priest, who in his life repaired the house, and in his days strengthened the Temple. . . . How glorious was he when the people gathered around him, at his coming forth out of the sanctuary. As the morning star in the midst of a cloud, as the moon at the full, as the sun shining forth in the Temple of the Most High, and as a rainbow giving light in clouds of glory."

The present walls of the old city of Jerusalem, which have a circuit of two and a half miles, are not very ancient as things go in this historical land. They were built by the Turkish Sultan, Suleiman the Great, who ruled in the time of Queen Elizabeth I. But fragments of the older walls of the Jewish city, built before and during the struggle against the Romans in the first century, are visible in many parts of the old and new town. The so-called 'Third Wall' to the north, built by King Agrippa to protect the suburbs shortly before the siege, is the best preserved. The Temple itself—and the walls which were its defence—were utterly destroyed by the Romans in



A.D. 70. And after a second desperate rising of the Jews under Bar-Cochba, in the second century, the city of Jerusalem was razed to the ground, and its name was blotted out.

A new Roman city, with the Latin name Aelia, from which the Jews were excluded, was built by the Roman Emperor Hadrian. (That emperor built the town in Northern England which then had the same name, Aelia, but we know as Newcastle-on-Tyne; and he built the Roman Wall to keep out the Picts and Scots from the Roman province of Britain.) The Romans sought to blot out not only Jerusalem but also the memory of Judaism. On the site of the Temple they erected a temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, and on the place where the Church of the Sepulchre was to rise two hundred years later, a Temple to Venus. The main gate of the city in the present circuit of walls, which is known as the Damascus Gate, and marks the beginning of the Great North Road to Syria, is called by the Arabs Bab-el-Amud, meaning literally, 'The Gate of the Pillar', because a column of that Temple stood just inside the gate. The name has been preserved, although the pillar was removed 1000 years ago.

At the beginning of the fourth century Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire, and Jerusalem was again an important place. The Jews, however, were only permitted by the Christian rulers to enter the city one day a year, on the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. Then they might pray at the relic of the Temple wall. Christian churches and shrines were multiplied from the time of the pious Christian Queen Helena, the mother of the first Christian Emperor Constantine. She was an English princess, married in the Roman province of Britain to the father of Constantine. She built the Church of the Sepulchre on the traditional place of the burial of Christ, and a Christian basilica on part of the area where the Temple had stood. That basilica remains as a place of worship, but transformed into a Moslem mosque known as El Aksa. Beneath it are vast substructures, traditionally the Stables of King Solomon, and used by the Crusader Knights for tethering their horses. You may still see the mangers and the tethering-posts.

When the Arabs conquered Palestine in A.D. 636, they allowed both Christians and Jews to have their places of worship. They renamed Jerusalem 'El Kuds El Sharif', meaning the noble, holy town, and it has borne that name among the

Arabs ever since. The principal Moslem shrine, called commonly the Mosque of Omar, was not built by Omar the Arab Conqueror, or in that century, but a hundred years later by one of the Omayyad Caliphs. It is properly named the Dome of the Rock, and is built over a huge slab of rock in the Temple area, which is reputed to be the threshing floor that David bought from the Jebusite, the place of the Altar in Solomon's Temple, and also the place where the Patriarch Abraham was offering his son Isaac till he was stayed by the Angel. It is one of the most beautiful buildings in the world, an octagon surmounted by a copper dome. Its outer structure is of porcelain tiles that gleam in the sun.

Through the Middle Ages Jerusalem was no city of peace, but the centre of strife between Christians and Moslems, the Cross and the Crescent. The Dome of the Rock for a century was the Church of the Templars. Finally, in the thirteenth century, the Christian Barons and Knights were driven out by Saladin; and thereafter Jerusalem was under Moslem rule unbrokenly till it was occupied by General Allenby with the British Forces in 1917. Christians, however, were allowed to live there, and many different Orders of monks and the many Christian Churches, Eastern and Western, had their places of worship and institutions in and about the city. The Jews, too, had their synagogues and houses of study. They cherished the faith in their return as a nation. Three times a day they prayed for it, and every family of their communities, scattered over the world, repeated each Passover eve the prayer: "Next year in Jerusalem."

The different Christian Churches engaged in endless disputes about their rights to the Holy Places, which were scenes of the life of Christ within the city. The wrangles were most bitter between the Eastern or Orthodox Church of the Greeks and the Russians, and the Western Roman Catholic or Latin Church, which recognized the supremacy of the Pope. The final schism between the two Churches had come in the eleventh century, about the time of the Norman Conquest of England, and was never healed. Disputes over the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem led to the Crimean War between Russia on the one side and the Turks allied with France and England on the other. By this time the peoples of Europe were taking a deep interest in the Holy Land. The Jews, too, were coming to the land in larger numbers; and gradually became a



majority of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. They could no longer live in the confined Jewish quarter of the Old City within the Walls. With the help of a munificent English Jew, Sir Moses Montefiore, who had been Sheriff of London when Queen Victoria came to the throne, and devoted his life to the well-being of the Jewish people, particularly in Palestine, they were able to build new quarters outside the Walled City. In each of these quarters a Kentish windmill, modelled on the mills of the county where Sir Moses had his home, was erected for grinding the corn.

Of the European Powers Russia was the first to set up big hostels for her pilgrims outside the Walled City. The earliest was on the site of the Camp of Titus, and that hostel is today the seat of the Supreme Court of Israel. The Russians were followed by the French, the Germans and the Italians. Till the First World War the English took a very modest place. They owned only a small Cathedral Church outside the walls, a missionary Church in the Walled City, and two schools. But after the occupation of Jerusalem in 1917, they established the centre of their mandatory administration in the city, and began to multiply government buildings and to lay out new suburbs. One of the main avenues which they constructed is known still as King George Avenue.

The Scotch Professor, Sir George Adam-Smith, who wrote a celebrated book on Jerusalem in the latter part of the nineteenth century, described it as "aloof, waterless, on the road to nowhere". That is no longer true. Jerusalem, under the British Administration, was linked with the rest of the country by railway and by good motor roads; and pipes were laid from the coastal plain to bring an adequate supply of water to its inhabitants.

The League of Nations Mandate for Palestine contemplated the establishment of an international commission which should examine the vexed questions of the Holy Places. That purpose, however, was not executed: because the nations and the Churches could not agree about the composition of the examining body. So matters were left as they were, except that the Jewish and Moslem rights at the Wall of the Temple-site were defined by an international committee, appointed by the League of Nations after the serious troubles in 1929 between Jews and Arabs.

During the thirty years of British Administration the city



was extended, mainly by Jewish enterprise, beyond any of its old limits. Today the suburbs stretch over a circuit of eleven miles, and they are continually spreading further. The description in the Book of Psalms: a city "built all compact together", still applies to the old town within the walls. It does not apply to the new town which sprawls over hills and valleys. To it the words of the Prophet Zachariah are more appropriate: "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as a town without walls, for the multitude of the men therein."

Three notable buildings were erected outside the walls during the period of the Mandate, and add greatly to the cultural life of Jerusalem. They typify the character of the modern city in which the old dominant religious interests are supplemented by a larger cultural activity. They are the Rockefeller Museum of Antiquities, given by a munificent American to be the treasure-house of the archaeological finds which are constantly unearthed in the Holy Land; a vast building of the Young Men's Christian Association, also an American gift, which is designed as a centre of physical and intellectual recreation for the youth of the three religious communities; and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem—with the University hospital—which rises on the Hill of Scopus, part of the ridge of the Mount of Olives to the east of the city. The hill is full of historical associations from ancient and modern times. On it Titus was encamped in the siege of Jerusalem A.D. 66–68. Below the ridge to the east is the village of the prophet Jeremiah, named in the Bible Anatot, and today Anata. The buildings of the University adjoin the British War Cemetery with the graves of 5000 men who fell in the war of 1914–18. The University is designed to be a centre of higher education and research for all.

Since the creation of the State of Israel, however, the Hill of Scopus has been cut off from the Jewish city, because it is within the Arab lines. The buildings of the University were heavily shelled during the first month of the War of Independence; but the area was demilitarized in June 1948, during the first cease-fire, and placed under the protection of the United Nations. It is occupied today by a body of Jewish police. The provision in the Armistice terms for an agreement between Jews and Arabs, by which the University buildings should be restored to their cultural purpose, has hitherto been frustrated. And the University has had to make shift with a

number of temporary and scattered buildings in the Jewish section of the city.

The decision of the United Nations about the partition of Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State provided that Jerusalem—together with Bethlehem, eight miles to the south, and a few villages—should be an international area under the trusteeship of the United Nations. The Jews at first accepted that solution, however reluctantly; the Arabs from the first resisted. And immediately after the British left Jerusalem in May 1948, fierce fighting was waged in and around Jerusalem by the Arab and Jewish armies. Indeed, the fierce fighting for the approaches to the city had been waged by irregular forces of the two peoples during the last months of the British Administration. The Arabs, whose villages commanded the heights above the road to Jerusalem from the coast, endeavoured to cut off the inhabitants in the Jewish part of the city from all supplies, and so to force surrender. But after a desperate struggle the Jews captured the chief Arab fortress above the road, Kastel, which had nearly 2000 years earlier been a Roman fort and garrison (*Castellum*). And though the old Jewish quarter within the walls of the city was taken by the Arab Army and destroyed, almost all the outer town, including its Arab as well as Jewish suburbs, was left in their hands. The Jews, having secured their part of the city by their own efforts, were no longer prepared to accept any international régime. Nor are the Arabs willing to give up their part, which has been added to the Kingdom of Jordan.

Unhappily it has not been possible to negotiate terms of peace, or even to provide for communication between the two areas. A literal 'iron curtain' divides streets of the city on the outskirts of the walls; and along the line a narrow 'no man's land', marked by coils of barbed wire, keeps the two areas rigidly separated. The citizen crosses the barrier at his peril.

The Old City within the Walls is still "a tangle of narrow streets and dark arcades"; as an English Royal Commission described it, "still indomitably Asiatic". Its main street runs from the Citadel of David, a relic of the ancient fortress of the Maccabees and Herod, by one of the eight gates of the walls, to the former Temple area. It is a long stone street, cobbled and descending by steps. No wheeled vehicle can pass it, but camels and donkeys carry the merchandise to and from the cavernous shops. The air is laden with the scent of coffee being



roasted and of sandalwood and spices. The Old City contained before 1948 four quarters: the Moslem, the Greek and Latin Christian, the Armenian, and the Jewish. The last was completely destroyed in the War of Independence, and no Jews are now living in it.

The centre of the Christian quarter is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, in which all the different Christian Churches have their jealously guarded section. In the courtyard of the church is the tomb of one of the Crusader Knights from England, who was a signatory of our Magna Charta. The first Church of the Sepulchre, as we have seen, was built by Queen Helena, who believed that she had found the true cross. The present church was built in the days of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth century. Much of that medieval building has been destroyed by fire: but the Norman foundations remain, and below it are relics of the Byzantine church.

From the Sepulchre Church to St. Stephen's Gate, which is the outlet from the city to the Mount of Olives on the east, and to the Road to Jericho, runs another narrow cobbled street. It is called *Via Dolorosa*—that is, the Road of Suffering. Along that street Jesus traditionally bore the Cross to Calvary; and the Stations of the Cross are each marked by a religious institute belonging to the Orthodox or the Latin or one of the Eastern Churches. One of them is another Norman church, of St. Anne, built by the Pool of Bethesda (John v.). St. Stephen's Gate is named after the first martyr of the Christian Church. Outside the Gate, and at the foot of the Mount of Olives on the east, is the Garden of Gethsemane, where Jesus before His arrest walked with the Apostles. A gnarled olive tree, reputed 3000 years old, flourishes in the Garden. Two churches have been erected next two rival sites of the Garden; one modern and ornate by the Latin, the other, older and mysterious, with seven gilded domes, by the Orthodox (Russian) Church. The Mount of Olives is crowned by a high belfry tower built by the Russians in the midst of a vast encampment for their pilgrims. In the days of the Czarist Empire they flocked to the Holy Land at Easter; and the Mount was one of the holiest places. Its slopes are a vast Jewish cemetery. For centuries pious Jews came to die in Jerusalem. Now, 150,000 Jews live and work in it, but all are outside the ancient walls.





*Top: Crusaders' Sea-Wall at Acre, which was the principal harbour of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. (See Ch. VII)*



*Centre: Hellenistic columns at Ascalon. The city of the Philistines was a flourishing town and harbour in the Graeco-Roman era. (See Ch. VII)*



*Bottom: Roman statues at Caesarea, which in the early centuries of the Christian era was the seat of the Roman government. (See Ch. VII)*

*Top:* Tiberias and Sea of Galilee. The town is on the right along the shore. The domes are over the Hot Springs, and the traditional tomb of Maimonides. (See Ch. IX)



*Centre:* Safad and Galilean Hills. The city of the Jewish mystics is clustered on the hillsides. (See Ch. IX)



*Bottom:* Ancient Synagogue at Capernaum. The building is of the first or second century and on the site of the synagogue where Jesus preached. (See Ch. IX)



The most beautiful addition which was made in the period of the British Mandate to the buildings of Jerusalem is the Museum of Antiquities. It is placed outside Herod's Gate in the northern section of the city, on a rocky knoll. Thanks to the many archaeological expeditions during the thirty years of British administration, and to the Palestine Law of Antiquities, entitling the Government to keep any find of historical and archaeological importance, the Museum is a treasury of antiquities worthy of the history of the land. Externally, too, the casket is befitting to its content. Every detail of the structure was worked out with loving care by its English architect, Austen Harrison. The two main galleries are grouped around an open court with a tiled pool in which grow reeds from Lake Huleh in Galilee. The walls are decorated with sculptures by Eric Gill, portraying the Sovereign Powers which have contributed to the civilization of Palestine: Egypt, Judea, Greece, Rome, etc.

During the last years the new Jewish Jerusalem outside the walls has become the seat of government and the seat of the parliament of Israel. It is rapidly growing also to be the intellectual and spiritual centre of the Jews of the world, as well as the capital city of Israel. Cultural institutions are multiplied in it, just as religious institutions were multiplied in the old city.

At the 3000th anniversary of the Jewish city a Convention Centre—still incomplete—was opened on a north-western hill for national and international gatherings. It is built on a commanding place where once the 10th Legion camped after the destruction of the Temple. Inscriptions of the Legion were found on the stones when they dug the foundations. The civic centre of the new Jewish Jerusalem, which will comprise the Ministries and residences of the President and Prime Minister of Israel, has begun to rise on an adjoining site. And beyond it to the south will be the new buildings of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

In the days of the Mandate, Jewish Jerusalem was extending, particularly on the western side, and three suburbs were spreading on the edge of the plateau. The nearest to the city is named after Sir Moses Montefiore, who 100 years ago was a pioneer of Jewish agricultural settlements. The second is known as the House of the Vineyard (Bet Hakerem), and it is set in a woodland. The third, known as House and Garden



(Bet Vegan), justifies its name. The three are linked by building of fresh suburbs. And it is an illustration of that continuity of history, which is without end, that in 1953 the Israel Exploration Society, uncovering a small Tell in the midst of the latest-built suburb—Bet Mazmil—found a 'high place' with sacrificial relics which dates from the time of the Kingdom of Judah.

The most striking and the most beautiful monument in the new Jerusalem is the burial-place of Israel's honoured dead. The body of Herzl, the creator of the modern Zionist movement, was removed from Vienna to Jerusalem in 1949; and his tomb is built on a knoll of the western ridge, which commands an expanse of the Judean hills and is now called Har (i.e. Mountain) Herzl. Below it are the graves of the men and women who fell in the War of Independence. They are laid in the terraces of the hills and are fragrant with flowers. Beyond that again is a green memorial for the 6,000,000 Jews who were exterminated by the Nazis. The Martyrs' Forest of millions of trees will stretch away from Jerusalem to the foot-hills ten miles' distant.

Jewish Jerusalem, in its western expansion, has already absorbed what was the Christian village of Ain Karim, the reputed birth-place of John the Baptist. The holy site was endowed with monasteries and convents of the Orthodox Church. The monks and nuns terraced the hill-sides, and made them shady with olive- and almond-trees.

The Arabs, for their part, have developed new suburbs outside the walls on the eastern side. Their area has 80,000 inhabitants, half being refugees. The supreme need for the well-being of Jerusalem is peace between Jews and Arabs. The present rigid separation of the two populations is perverse, a daily irritation. The plan for an international government and an internationalized City as a *Corpus Separatum*, belonging neither to the Arab nor the Jewish State, has slender hope of fulfilment. Both Arabs and Jews, however, are willing to accept an international authority which will assure the guardianship of the Holy Places of the three creeds.

Jerusalem is the centre and symbol of the Jewish renaissance. Just as in the nineteenth century Italians could not conceive of a revived Italian nation with any other capital but Rome, so Israel cannot conceive of a Jewish State with any other capital but Jerusalem. For Arabs too it is a point of pride

that the Old City, which includes the third most Holy Place of Islam, is again under Moslem-Arab rule.

When the physical barriers between the two Jerusalems have been removed, as they must be, and there is again freedom of movement for all the inhabitants, the city will be larger than it ever has been, and it will again merit the Psalmist's description: "Beautiful in elevation and the joy of the whole earth." In the fullness of days, to use the Bible words, we may hope that the three universal religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, which look to Jerusalem as the Holy City, will have in the city a visible symbol of their common faith in a single humanity.

## CHAPTER VII

### *The Coastal Towns*

TEL-AVIV-JAFFA; HAIFA-ACRE; ATHLIT; CAESAREA;  
ASCALON; GAZA

THE largest town in Israel is Tel-Aviv, which is less than fifty years old and has over 300,000 inhabitants. It has absorbed the much older Jaffa, whose history goes back 4000 years; and the combined town is known as Tel-Aviv-Jaffa. Tel-Aviv—its Hebrew name means Hill of Spring—started in 1910 as a Jewish garden-suburb of Jaffa, rising out of the waste of sand-dunes to the north of that city. During the First World War, at the time of the British military occupation of Southern Palestine in 1917, it was still a small suburb with 3000 inhabitants. But after the Arab riots at Jaffa in 1921, when a mob stormed and sacked the Jewish immigration-house by the port, a large part of the Jewish population of Jaffa moved its residence to the Jewish township, for security's sake. Tel-Aviv began to assert municipal independence and formed its Local Council. Once set on that course, it strode ahead rapidly, and soon surpassed the older city in size, wealth and enterprise of every kind. It was, throughout the time of the Mandate, the chief port of the Return, and it was the first all-Jewish town in the world. It has no historic core. Its buildings are modern, white, cubist. Its principal business street bears the name of Allenby.

Jaffa, whose Hebrew name means 'beautiful', is recorded as a port in some of the earliest Egyptian monuments. Throughout the ages it has been the place on the sea by which men and merchandise passed to and from Jerusalem. The prophet Jonah sailed from there for Tarshish. It is indeed beautifully situated on a rocky promontory which rises 150 feet above the sea, its houses clustered on the terraces of the hill. Around it are groves of palms, and in modern times a belt of orange-orchards, of which the sweet scent fills the air. A French poet wrote of it 100 years ago, "a perfect abode for a man weary of life who desires nothing but a place in the sun".

Jaffa was not included for long in the biblical Kingdom of



Judah. It is recorded in the Book of Chronicles that the cedars of Lebanon, which King Solomon ordered from the Phoenician King Hiram of Tyre for building the Temple of Jerusalem, were floated on rafts to Jaffa and transported to Solomon's capital. But the Phoenicians, who were the supreme mariners of the ancient world, were the masters of the Port. Towards the end of the eighth century, the Assyrians from the north conquered it. Sennacherib recorded the capture in a cuneiform monument, now in the British Museum. Four hundred years later Alexander the Great occupied the place and renamed it Joppa,<sup>1</sup> after the daughter of the God of the Winds. It became, like the other port-towns of Palestine, a Hellenistic city.

Judah the Maccabee and his brothers captured it in the second century B.C. from the Hellenistic Seleucid Kingdom and held it; and for over 200 years it was a Jewish Port, "a haven for ships to go thence to the isles of the Sea". At about the same time the last Phoenician stronghold, Carthage, in North Africa, was destroyed by the Romans. The Jewish Fleet there fought the Roman Fleet in the first century of the Christian era. Some of the earliest Christians lived in Jaffa; and the Apostle Peter came there to visit Tabitha or Dorcas, "a woman full of good works". He stayed in the house of Simon the Tanner—which is still shown.

A Jewish cemetery of the early centuries A.D. was unearthed outside modern Jaffa. The inscriptions on the grave-stones are mainly in Greek, but some in Hebrew and Aramaic. One in Greek is on the grave of the President of the community of Tarsus, the town from which Paul came. The President was a linen merchant, and may have been bringing his merchandise to Jerusalem.

Jaffa in the Middle Ages was one of the chief harbours of the Crusaders. A fierce struggle for it was waged for 150 years between them and the Saracens and the Egyptians. The English Crusading King, Richard Cœur-de-Lion, defeated Saladin and the Saracens outside Jaffa in 1192. Its walls were destroyed many times, till finally the conquering Mameluke Sultan of Egypt, Baibars, razed it to the ground in 1268, and drove out the Christians.

In the nineteenth century Jaffa was revived as the port of Southern Palestine, and was linked with Jerusalem by a

<sup>1</sup> The seaside suburb of Edinburgh is called Joppa.

railway. During the first years of the Mandate it was the main place of Jewish immigration. When, however, the Arab rebellion in 1936 made it impossible for Jews to use the port, Tel-Aviv had another great advance. The Jews resolved to build there a jetty and a quay, so that they might be independent of their neighbours. Neither Jaffa nor Tel-Aviv was fitted by nature for a modern harbour. But Tel-Aviv adjoins the mouth of a perennial river, which could be adapted for the purpose. The River Yarkon (Auja), sixteen miles long, flows from the foot-hills of Judea to the sea three miles north of Jaffa, and the mouth is now within the borders of Tel-Aviv. Recent excavations of a mound, Tel Kassileh, by its banks have revealed the foundations of an ancient Canaanite and Philistine city which was destroyed by fire in the tenth century B.C. On its ruins the Israelites built another city. These finds supply the modern all-Jewish town with a title-deed of respectable antiquity.

Throughout the period of the British Mandate, Tel-Aviv and Jaffa were the principal centres of commerce and industry. They remain that today in Israel, and are united in a single town. Many of the Jewish national institutions have their centre in Tel-Aviv. Among them the Federation of Labour, which comprises the majority of Jewish workers by hand and head in the country, has built a sky-scraper for its offices. The cultural centre of the Jewish population also is rather in Tel-Aviv than in Jerusalem, because of its much larger Jewish population. The Palestine—now Israel—Symphony Orchestra resides there, and has to repeat each of its programmes many times in the town. The two principal dramatic companies and the Opera Company likewise have their home and their theatre in Tel-Aviv. The principal Hebrew newspapers are published there. The principal Art Gallery of Israel is there, in the house given to the town by one of its founding fathers and its first Mayor.

It was in the Art Gallery that Israel's Declaration of Independence was read by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ben Gurion, on that historic afternoon of May 14th, 1948, the day when the British Mandate came to an end. For the first year and a half of the State of Israel the Government Offices were placed in a suburb of Tel-Aviv which was originally a village of the German Christian farmers, the Templars. The Germans called the place Sarona (i.e. of Sharon). It was renamed in



Hebrew *Hakiryá*, meaning simply the City; and though most of the head offices have been moved to Jerusalem, the farmers' houses remain dedicated to their new purpose. Most of the foreign legations remain in Tel-Aviv, because the Foreign Office of Israel was there until the summer of 1953, and these States do not recognize Jewish Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

Commercially, Tel-Aviv owed its rapid growth in great part to its being the natural centre of the orange trade. The area around Jaffa was as one big orchard, owned half by Arabs and half by Jews. The orange was brought to the Middle East from India by the Portuguese in the early days of the settlement of European merchants. We first read of it as growing around Jaffa in the eighteenth century. It is a curious example of the fortunes of names that the Arabs call the orange '*Burtukan*', meaning the Portuguese fruit. (Arabic has no 'p', and substitutes 'b' for it.)

The rivalry between Tel-Aviv and Jaffa has ceased, since they are one Jewish town. In the struggle for independence the Jewish forces, even before the British Mandate had come to an end, made themselves masters of the Arab city, and the bulk of the Arab inhabitants took flight. A large part of their quarter has been occupied by incoming Jewish immigrants. Of the 300,000 population in the combined towns about 5000 only are Arabs; the rest are Jews from every part of the world.

Haifa, however, today, and not Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, is the principal port of immigration. Its Hebrew name means port; and it has a splendid natural situation for that purpose. It occupies the southern end of the Bay of Acre, which is sheltered from the winds by the heights of Mount Carmel, that are all about it. In antiquity Haifa was not so famous, because the port of the Egyptians and the Phoenicians, as of the Greeks and the Romans, in this part of Palestine was Acre (*Accho*), at the northern end of the Bay, twelve miles away. The rocky ledges jutting into the sea, which then made Acre the more favoured, were its undoing in modern seagoing conditions; and today it is only a small fishing port.

The history of Acre goes back to the days before the Children of Israel were in Palestine. It is mentioned in the Egyptian monuments among the towns that the Pharaohs conquered in their campaign against the Hittites, about 1500 B.C. Like Jaffa, it became a Phoenician city; and we know that



the Athenians had a trading colony there in the fourth century. After the Gerek conquest of the Middle East, Acre received the Greek name Ptolemais, in honour of one of the Ptolemies—the Greek dynasty of Egypt—who ruled Palestine in the third century B.C. St. Paul refers to his stay there on his way from Tyre to Jerusalem (Acts xxi, 7). It was the chief port of the Crusaders, and a great place of maritime trade for the 200 years when the Genoese and the Venetians had their colonies in the Latin Kingdom of Palestine. Marco Polo of Venice, the prince of travellers, visited it in 1271, on his way to China. In those days the Christians added the name of a Christian Saint, and called the place Saint-Jean-d'Acre. During two centuries Palestine was to Europe what America was to it in modern times, the magnet of the adventurous; and it held in the commerce of the world much the same place as the British Isles held in modern times, as a meeting-point between East and West. Acre became important again in the nineteenth century as port and fort, having been rebuilt by the famous Jezzar Pasha, the Butcher, who fought Napoleon.

The white sand of the Bay of Acre has been famous for the making of glass from the days of the Phoenicians. It was by a river—Belus, it was called in antiquity—which runs into the Bay close to the town, and carried down the sand that, according to tradition, sailors first discovered glass by lighting a fire and finding the strange matter in the embers. Today a glass factory is working in the Bay. Another remarkable invention is ascribed to Acre. When in 1832, the Egyptian Pasha, Ibrahim, son of Mohammed Ali (see p. 46) was besieged there by British forces, a cannon-ball destroyed the hookahs—the 'hubble-bubbles'—which the men of the Egyptian Army used to smoke. An ingenious soldier used the 'Dutch tubes', which contained the powder for the guns, as a wrapper for the tobacco, and so made the first cigarettes. It is said that Laurence Oliphant, a romantic Englishman who settled in Palestine, introduced cigarettes into English society.

It was not till the latter part of the nineteenth century that Haifa began to take precedence as a port over Acre. Before that it had been famous for its Carmelite Monastery, placed half-way up the mountain, above the town. The site is traditionally the place where Elijah dwelt. It is known as Mar Elias—St. Elijah; but the Monastery itself, by the traditional cave of the Prophet's residence, is called 'The Star of the Sea', because a

lighthouse was attached to it. The whole ridge of Carmel—meaning Vineyard of God—is associated with Elijah. The highest point is crowned by another Monastery, of 'The Burning'; and is traditionally the site where he called down the lightning on the priests of Baal.

The Order of Carmelites was formed in the twelfth century by the Crusaders. They knew the place as Caiaphas—confusing Haifa (French, Caiffa) with the name of the High Priest in the time of Jesus, or with Kephias, the Greek name of Peter. Before the Crusades Jews were allowed to settle in Haifa by the Arab Caliph of Bagdad, and they stood a siege of the Christian hosts in 1100. During the Jewish occupation it became the favoured burial-place, because it was in the territory of the Children of Israel, while Acre was not. The medieval town was destroyed in a battle between the Turks and the local chieftains in the eighteenth century. But the site was soon reoccupied, and Napoleon's invading army held it during his siege of Acre.

The first modern European settlement, which brought Western ways and Western enterprise to Haifa, was of the German sect of Templars. They came from Würtemberg to the Holy Land in the latter part of the century to lead a more Christian way of life, and placed their chief settlement on the promontory of Carmel. Today they have all left, but their village, now occupied by Jews, is the most beautiful suburb in the country. After the Germans Jewish settlers came and built quarters by the sea and on the slopes of the Carmel. They built also a Technical College to train architects and engineers and skilled craftsmen. Today the Jews are the great majority of the inhabitants. They number 150,000, and they increase month by month. Of the Arab population, which numbered 50,000 before the State of Israel was created, only 6000 remain.

Another settlement of a different kind in Haifa, and also in Acre, is a religious community from Persia. Over 120 years ago a Moslem religious reformer who proclaimed a universalist teaching was martyred in Persia. One of his disciples was exiled, and then was imprisoned by the Turkish Sultan in the fortress of Acre. Eventually he was released and made his home in Haifa. Known as Baha-Ullah—which means the glory of God—he called on all peoples and their rulers to establish the true religion, just government and international peace. His

son, Abbas—who was knighted after the British occupation of Palestine—preached the new faith in Europe and America, and won a considerable following, particularly in America. The bodies of the founders of the Bahai religion, including the first martyr, are buried on the Carmel mountain, above Haifa, and a beautiful Persian Garden has been planted, and a shrine built around the burial-place.

Abbas had in 1914 the vision of Haifa as a great city:

"In the future, the space between Acre and Haifa will be built up, and the two cities will clasp hands, becoming the two ends of a mighty metropolis. The semi-circular bay will be transformed into a noble harbour wherein the ships of all nations will seek shelter and refuge. The flowers of civilization and culture from all nations will be brought here to blend their fragrances."

His vision is on the way to fulfilment.

Herzl, the founder of the modern Zionist Movement, visited Haifa in 1899, and had a similar vision of the city of the future. In a romance about the Jewish Home he portrayed its future as a port:

"Great ships lay anchored in the roadstead between Acre and the foot of the Carmel. Massive stone breakwaters made the harbour the safest and most convenient port in the eastern Mediterranean. Every kind of craft, flying the flags of all nations, lay sheltered there."

His vision, also, is on the way to fulfilment.

The British Administration of Palestine early set about the construction of a modern harbour at Haifa. They reclaimed from the sea a large area on which they erected quays and wharves, and built a new main street, 'Kingsway'—now renamed Street of Independence—in place of the narrow alleys of the old Turkish port. Jewish enterprise developed a large industrial area with many factories of heavy and light industries along Haifa Bay. Among them one turns out 6000 motor vehicles a year—largely for export. The plans for Haifa Bay were made by the English town-planner, Sir Patrick Abercrombie. An English enterprise, the Iraq Petroleum Company, erected an oil-refinery and oil-storage area at the



end of the pipe-line. That was laid before the Second World War to carry to the sea the oil over 600 miles from the wells near Mosul in the mountains of Iraq. The pipe-line has been out of use since the Jewish-Arab War, because the Arabs cut off the oil in Iraq. But new industries are being multiplied by the Jewish immigrants all the way to Acre.

Haifa is also today the principal station of the little Navy of Israel and of its Merchant Marine. The latter is rapidly growing, and in 1953 counted over 150,000 tons of shipping. The ships of Israel bring a large part of the immigrants who have been entering Palestine since 1948. A Marine School has been established in Haifa, and is attached to the Technical College. The River Kishon, which is called in the Bible "that ancient stream", and runs a few miles north of Haifa into the Bay, has been canalized so as to enlarge the harbour and provide more wharves.

The old town of Acre rises at the end of the Bay in a gleaming pearl-like point. The green dome and the minarets of its principal mosque, built in the early years of the nineteenth century, are the conspicuous landmarks. Acre is today a mixed Jewish-Arab town. The centre of narrow streets within the walls of the medieval fortress is mainly Arab; the new quarters with tree-lined avenues outside the walls are occupied by Jewish immigrants. The centre government is in a fortress-like Police barracks by the sea, one of some eighty strongholds which were built by the British Administration, during the Arab revolt of 1936-39, in the main towns of Palestine and at the principal junctions on the highways. The Jewish settlements stretch away to the north of Acre, along the fertile coastland as far as the frontier. That is a high chalk cliff resembling the white cliffs of Dover, and is called 'The Ladder of Tyre'. The other side of the frontier is Syria, which, indeed, is called after the Hebrew name of Tyre—Sur—the Phoenician port a few miles to the north.

Coming south from Haifa, new villages by the sea are multiplied all the way to Tel-Aviv and Jaffa. They are fishing and agricultural villages of the Jewish settlers, and several of them are planted around places famous in ancient and medieval history. The road that runs from Egypt along the coast of Palestine to Syria is the most famous highway of conquering armies. It was known of old as 'the Way of the Sea'—Via Maris, in Latin—and along it marched the Egyptians and the

Hittites, the Assyrians and the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans, the Arabs and the Saracens and the Christian knights, and lastly, Napoleon and General Allenby. Nowhere in the world is such a pageant of history visible as in the diggings of the ancient sites strewn by that road.

We can trace, for example, the whole civilization of man at a small place on the coast, fifteen miles south of Haifa, named Athlit. In the days of the Mandate a board at the railway station at Athlit announced: 'For the famous Crusader Castle.' That castle—of the Pilgrims, as it was known in the Middle Ages—rising on a promontory from the sea in a rugged mass of ruined towers and walls, is the most striking thing on the landscape. Close by, in a break of the foot-hills of Mount Carmel, lie deep and dark caves. They are as famous in the annals of pre-history as is the castle in the chronicles of the Middle Ages. The caves had been marked twenty-five years ago as a quarry for the stone for building the Haifa harbour. The Government Inspector of Antiquities, who made a survey of the caves before the quarrying began, discovered there, amid a mass of relics of the Stone Age, a carving of bone representing a bull-calf and beautifully executed. The discovery led a group of four English women archaeologists to carry out a thorough investigation of the caves. In a neighbouring area they had found a treasure of palaeolithic industries, of the earliest Stone Age. (One of the four women, Miss Garrod, later became the first woman professor at Cambridge University; another, Miss Hopkins [Mrs. Jacquetta Hawkes], has written enchanting books on the story of England.) Their excavations revealed a number of skeletons of primitive man, at least 100,000 years old. In other caves of the Stone Age they discovered traces of a civilization of about 6000 B.C. including perfectly formed tools of flint, sickles and other agricultural implements. The culture is called by the archaeologists Natufian, from a valley in this region where the caves were found. The cultivation of the soil was practised in Palestine in that remote age; and nowhere else in the world is there such clear indication of the early progress of man to the practical arts.

A remarkable feature of the skeletons is that, as the anthropologists have revealed, they belong to a race—Mount Carmel man—between most primitive man—which we call the Neanderthal, after a valley in the Ruhr area of Northern



Germany—and the *homo sapiens*, the creature who begins to think and to master other creatures to his service. Palestine, it seems, even in the prehistoric age, was a bridge between the races. And it is likely that the human species, as distinct from the Ape-man, came to Europe from or through Palestine.

The excavation of a Tell—that is, a mound which covers an ancient site—at Athlit has revealed a cemetery of the eighteenth century B.C. with bodies and ornaments of Egyptians and Phoenicians. A few miles away by the shore you see on another rocky promontory the rounded columns and the capitals of a Greek Temple, and a theatre with its stage and its tiers of seats, and shelves in the rock fashioned for beaching the galleys. Here a lovely statue of Aphrodite, the Greek goddess, of the classical school of the fifth century B.C., was found; it is believed that a settlement of Athenians must have come to the Phoenician coast. We know from one of the Greek writers of the fourth century that the Athenians had a trading post at Acre, 20 miles to the North.

The castle at Athlit was the last place in which the Knights-Templar held out after the fall of Jerusalem and of Acre. They were finally driven out in the year 1291, during the reign of King Edward I of England. A little later they came to London, and established themselves in that corner of Westminster which is still called after them The Temple, but is occupied today by the Lawyers and not by the Knights. There remains, however, from the Templars' habitation the Round Church, that copied the Church of the Templars, the transformed Dome of the Rock, in Jerusalem.

During the last fifty years the Jewish settlement has been spread around the prehistoric caves and the ruins of the Crusader Castle. It began with an agricultural village on the Plain, to which is now attached a temporary village for some thousands of new immigrants. Salt-pans are laid out in what had been malarial marshes; and the salt which supplies Israel is produced by evaporation of the sea-water. By the side of these pans are barracks of Israel's Navy. And a fishing village of Jews from Salonika—formerly an important centre of Jewish enterprise in the Levant—is planted by the sea. A military camp, used in the Mandate period to intern 'illegal' immigrants, is now a reception centre for those who come rightfully to the country. Adjoining it is a sad modern ruin. There the first Agricultural Experimental Station in Palestine



was established by a Jewish scientist of genius before 1914. The Turks destroyed it during the First World War, suspecting that it was being used for purposes of British Army Intelligence.

So in this little space the ages meet, prehistoric, ancient, medieval and present. The Jews are restoring the fertility of the soil where their ancestors ploughed, and building a fishing harbour where another Semitic people had their haven 3000 years ago. They are the link of continuity.

Ten miles south of Athlit are the ruins of a greater harbour. The place was the chief town of the Roman province of Palestine for 500 years after the destruction of Jerusalem in the first century. Here was Caesarea ad Mare (by the Sea). It was built originally by King Herod in honour of his Roman Emperor-patron, Augustus. It was in those days a town of a quarter of a million inhabitants, part Jews, but the greater part Gentiles, and was known as Little Rome. The ruins of Theatres and Temples and colossal statues are strewn for miles about the fields, and other statues have been found in the sea, including one in porphyry of a Roman Emperor of the third century. Air photographs have traced the plan of the big city; and the remnants of two aqueducts, built by Herod, can be seen amid the sand-dunes. Pontius Pilate and the later Roman governors resided there; and St. Paul was brought there before the Roman Governor, Felix, and was imprisoned for two years. Caesarea was one of the principal seats of the Christian Church in the Holy Land for some hundreds of years, before Jerusalem became the Christian metropolis. It corresponded with Canterbury in Saxon England.

In the third century, while the Empire was pagan, the Christian philosopher, Bishop Origen, had his school there and was martyred. Like many other historical places on the coast, it was occupied by the Crusaders—the pious French King St. Louis built a castle—and the circuit of their medieval walls remains. In the latter part of the nineteenth century the Turks made an attempt to colonize the place with Bosnians, who remained under the British Mandate. Today a Jewish fishing village and agricultural settlement—called Meadows of the Sea—is planted amid the ruins. And a Museum of Antiquities found in the region has been built by the settlers. Every year adds to its treasures, some recovered from the sea. It bears the name of another martyr, of our own days, Hannah Senesh. A poetess, member of the village, she gave her

life during World War II while organizing the Resistance Movement against the Nazis in her native Hungary.

Southwards from Tel-Aviv and Jaffa to the Egyptian frontier by Gaza, the Coastal Plain is dotted with famous names of what were towns of the Philistines: Ashdod (the Arabic Esdud), and Ascalon, Ekron and Gath and Gaza itself. Ashdod, which was a resting place of Israel's Ark of the Covenant, and 1000 years later became the important Hellenistic town Azotus, is now the site of a ruined Arab village, and has not been excavated. But the site of Ascalon is strewn with Hellenistic columns, and is being systematically explored. Ascalon was a historic meeting-place of civilizations for more than 2500 years, from 1400 B.C., when it is recorded in the Egyptian monuments, to A.D. 1300, when it was destroyed by the Egyptian Sultan Baibars. The celebrated inscription of the Pharaoh Merenptah (1250 B.C.) runs: "Ascalon is carried off; Gaza is seized; Israel is desolate without seed." (See chapter XI, p. 137.) The Philistines held Ascalon and all this coast till they were taken into captivity by the Babylonians. Then Egypt again extended her sway over it; and later Herod, the master-builder of cities, who was born in Ascalon, rebuilt it with great magnificence. Today sand-dunes have buried most of the ancient ruins. But the sacred pool of the Philistine Goddess Ashtaroath, later identified with the Syrian Astarte, has been excavated.

When the Arabs conquered the Middle East, Ascalon was again an important trading city, and Jews were permitted to live in it. A famous Spanish-Jewish traveller of the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela, found there 200 Jews besides 300 Samaritans. The Crusaders had another of their harbours at Ascalon: but in the thirteenth century town and harbour were destroyed by the Saracens, and for 600 years the site was deserted. In our day a group of Jews from South Africa have settled amid the ruins, and have begun to build a new town and a new port to serve the Negev. They are laying it out spaciouly with tree-lined avenues, like a town in Cape Colony or Natal. In the neighbouring town of Migdal-Gad—formerly a centre of Arab weavers—the main factory of Israel for irrigation pipes is established.

Gaza, meaning the Strong Place, the town where Samson destroyed himself and his Philistine captors, is for a time in Egyptian possession. Time and again it has been destroyed and



rebuilt. During the war with Israel it was occupied by the Egyptian Army, and 200,000 Arab refugees are camped in a narrow strip around the town. Before the First World War it was the port of Southern Palestine, and during that war it was in great part destroyed by British bombardment. It has never recovered: but in World War II the British Army built in the neighbourhood vast camps which are now places of refuge for the Arab fugitives.

Sir Flinders Petrie, the pioneer of scientific excavation in Egypt and Palestine, celebrated in 1932 his jubilee year as an archaeologist by exploring a Tell a few miles south of the present Gaza, and revealing a wealth of primitive Egyptian treasures. Tel Ajjul, meaning the Mound of the Calf, rises fifty feet above the River (Wadi) of Gaza, which in the summer is a dry-bed and in the winter may be a roaring torrent. The mound covered a city of fifty acres, many times as big as ancient Jerusalem, and there were the ruins of habitation from 3000-1500 B.C. The main city was of the Semitic Hyksos, who had their fortress and their bases in this borderland between Palestine and Egypt. The streets of the city were preserved beneath the soil and the sand, as perfect as those of Pompeii, near Naples. Houses opened on to them on each side; and dominating the place was the shell of a palace, with bathrooms and water-jars still intact. There were platters of pottery, some beautiful with pictures of birds and cattle, others decorated with geometrical designs. In the courtyard of the palace were the graves of the warriors with their horses. The human body was placed at the bottom of a pit, and the skeleton of a horse was on the ground-level at the door of the palace. The horse was the revolutionary weapon of the Hyksos and gave them the mastery of Egypt. Though they are known in history as the Shepherd Kings, they were rather the Equestrian Kings.

A few miles to the east of this Tell, a higher mound rose above the River of Gaza, and was also explored by Flinders Petrie. The Arab name, Tel Djemmi, was changed to Jimmy's Hill by the British Army, which held the place as a strong-point in 1917. Excavation proved it to be the Gerar of the Bible, where Abraham pitched his tent and made a covenant with a Philistine Sheikh (Gen. xx). The hill was 600 feet long and 200 feet high. Its most striking feature was a series of granaries, which would hold corn sufficient to feed 100,000 men for two months. They may be compared with the granaries of



Malta, beneath the streets of Valetta. Below the granaries was the foundation of Egyptian and Canaanite cities. So along the coast, which stretches 150 miles from the Ladder of Tyre to the borders of Egypt, history and pre-history, from 20,000 years ago to our own day, are stored above and below the ground. And the old sites are renewed and resurrected, as the people returning to them are renewing their youth.

## CHAPTER VIII

### *The Judean Foot-hills*

THE Judean hills, known in Hebrew as the 'Shefela', that is, the Lowlands, were the cradle of Hebrew prophets. They were, too, the scene of the victory of Joshua over 'the Kings' of the Canaanite towns and villages, and of the heroic struggle of the Maccabees against the Greek armies over 2000 years ago. In our day they have been the testing ground for the Army of Israel in the War of Independence. The decisive campaign in the war of 1948 was the battle of the road that winds through these foot-hills from the coast to Jerusalem. It was fought, during the last six months of the British Mandate and the first two months of the State of Israel, to raise the siege of Jewish Jerusalem. The city was attacked and beleaguered by the Arab armies from three sides—south, north and east. Only on the west side, and by heroic efforts, could the Jewish forces, based on a few Jewish agricultural villages in the foot-hills, keep the way open for the food convoys, which must sustain the 100,000 Jewish inhabitants of the city. And the main road being under constant enemy fire, they had at night to fashion a new track, 'The Road of Courage'. History and archaeology have proved through the ages that the command of a few strong places in the foot-hills, guarding the road from the plain to the plateau, was the aim of the invaders and the strength of the defenders.

We will take the history of two fortresses often mentioned in the Bible to illustrate the lesson. They were excavated in this century, one before the First World War in the Turkish régime; the other between the wars, in the régime of the British Mandate. The earlier exploration was of the Canaanite fortress city of Gezer; not to be confused with Gaza of the Philistines, though it is not far from it and was also a Philistine stronghold. It was directed by Professor Macalister for the Palestine Exploration Fund in the decade 1902-12. The other site was known locally as Tel Duweir; but, when excavated in the thirties, was proved beyond a doubt to cover the Biblical Lachish. That fortress town is mentioned frequently in the Bible, in the Books of Joshua, Kings and

Chronicles. It was destroyed by Joshua, it was fortified again by King Rehoboam, and King Azariah was murdered there. It was captured by the Assyrian King Sennacherib, in the reign of Hezekiah, and Hezekiah sent his embassy to it to negotiate a peace. It was one of the last cities to stand against Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian conqueror, in the invasion of Judea 100 years later, which led to the first captivity; and it was re-settled by the Jews after the return from the captivity.

British archaeologists had been searching for the site of Lachish for two generations, since in 1859 Sir Henry Layard discovered at ancient Nineveh a tablet recording the siege and storming of the town by Sennacherib. Sixty years ago, one of the great pioneers of Palestine archaeology, the late Sir William Flinders Petrie, thought he had found it when he dug the mound known as Tel el-Hesi, not far from Tel Duweir in the foot-hills. And that identification was generally accepted. The mound of Hesi bore many indications of Canaanite and Hebrew occupation, continuous for centuries, and extending throughout the period recorded in the Bible mentions of Lachish. But there was nothing decisive in the results of the excavation, no inscription, no pottery marked with a name, except one cuneiform tablet of the Assyrian period.

One of Flinders Petrie's disciples, the late Mr. J. L. Starkey, felt doubt, and years later was struck by the appearance of another mound, named Tel Duweir, a few miles away. With uncanny intuition he believed that here he might find the Biblical Lachish; and he convinced two munificent patrons of archaeology in England, Sir Henry Wellcome, the head of a great pharmaceutical industry, and Sir Charles Marston, a leading industrialist, to give him the means of trying. He began work in 1932, and continued it till 1938, when he was murdered by the Arabs, then in revolt against the Government. In the third year of his working he proved the justice of his intuition by an incredible stroke of good fortune.

The workers of the expedition unearthed eighteen potsherds—broken pieces of pottery—bearing an ancient Hebrew script written in ink. The sherds, when deciphered by a scholar of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, told a vivid story of the last days of the Kingdom of Judah, before the Temple of Solomon was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. The story reported on these potsherds confirmed details in Jeremiah's account of



the Babylonian invasion, and they could be dated unhesitatingly in the days of the Prophet. They established also that the place in which they were found was Lachish, which, next to Jerusalem, was the strongest fortress in Judea, and was the headquarters of the Judean Army resisting the invader from the coast. For many of the scraps of pottery were despatches from an officer named Hosha, who was commanding an outpost north of Lachish, and addressed them to his Commanding Officer, the Lord Yaush, in Lachish. The name Lachish appeared not only in one of these despatches, but also inscribed on a stone found in the excavation. So here, without doubt, was the fortress of Lachish. Here, too, were documents written in the Phoenician Hebrew script of the period before the exile, and dated with certainty a few years before 587 B.C. the year of the destruction of Jerusalem. They were the first documents of a personal character found among the sparse writings of antiquity which have survived in the Holy Land.

Some of the despatches sent by the officer in the outpost concerned a prophet whose messages "are not good and weaken the hands of the country". The officer wishes him to be arrested and tried because he is preaching defeatism. The scholars have identified this unnamed prophet with Uriah, referred to in Jeremiah xxvi, 20-23, who "prophesied against Jerusalem and against this land, according to all the words of Jeremiah". The name of Jeremiah himself occurs on one of the potsherds, but tantalizingly there is not enough to connect it with certainty with the Bible Prophet. The unnamed prophet is described as 'the Seer of Kiryat Yearim' (City of Forests), and scholars have inferred that the outpost, from which the despatches were sent, was in this hill-town that lies on the road from the coast to Jerusalem.

The potsherds provided a further link with the story in Jeremiah about Uriah. On one of them it is written: "To thy slave (that is, the commander of the outpost), it has been told; down went the commander of the army, Y. son of Elnathan, and came to Egypt." In the Bible book of the Prophet, it is told how "King Jehoiakhim sent men into Egypt, Elnathan, the son of Akbiba, and others with him. And they fetched Uriah out of Egypt and brought him to the King, who slew him with the sword and cast his dead body into the grave of the common people." Scholars have suggested that, as all the potsherds were found together in a guard-room, they were

used by the commander of the fortress as evidence in a military trial in which he judged the 'enemy of the people'. When the city fell, and was razed to the ground by Nebuchadnezzar, the material was buried beneath the burned debris; and so this record of a court-martial in the crisis of the war between Judah and Babylon has been miraculously preserved.

In the debris were found also a stone seal with the name of Shebner, and a clay seal of Gedalia, 'who is over the House', that is, the Lord Chamberlain. Shebner, the Scribe, is mentioned in the Book of Isaiah (xxxvi, 3), as companion of King Hezekiah when Sennacherib, the King of Assyria, having captured Lachish, summons the King of Judah to surrender. And Gedalia was appointed to be the Governor of the captive territory of Judah after the last King, Zedekiah, was taken prisoner to Babylon (2 Kings xxv, 22). It may be that in the last struggle Gedalia was the Governor of the fortress, and it was to him that Jeremiah was committed for custody (Jer. xl and xli). Pious Jews still mourn his death annually.

Besides the sensational potsherds, the Mound of Lachish has given up rich treasure to the archaeologist. Four pottery ewers and a censer were found, in different levels and of different centuries, but all of the second millennium. They bore painted screeds which, it is believed, are early examples of a Semitic or Phoenician alphabetic script. The writing has not been completely deciphered; but one of the inscriptions declares a gift to three Canaanite deities. It provides a link between the religious cults of Southern Canaan, in the period of the Hebrew occupation, and the cults of Northern Canaan, which we know as Syria. A brilliant light was shed over that ancient civilization by the finding, by French scholars, a few years before Starkey's expedition, of a Library in the buried Temple of the lost Phoenician port of Ugarit, in Northern Syria (see page 159). The Library contains hundreds of cuneiform tablets, cut on clay by a wedge, and some of them are in a syllabic script which marks the stage from picture words to alphabet. The Syrian finds together with the jars and potsherds of Lachish, have established, beyond a peradventure, that writing with a pen was a regular form of record from the middle of the second millennium. They have established also that there were constant economic and political relations between the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The most recent finds in Ugarit comprise hundreds of



tablets in the Akkadian language, which was the international tongue of the Hittite Empire in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C. The documents are indeed in five different scripts and eight different languages, indicating how international was the life on the Eastern Mediterranean sea-board, then as now. One of the tablets, not hitherto interpreted, is in the Minoan script of the Greeks, which has not given up its secrets.

A bronze dagger, found in a tomb at Lachish, which is dated as at the end of the Hyksos dynasty of Egypt, 1600-1550 B.C.—a little later than the patriarchs Jacob and Joseph were in Egypt—bore a vertical inscription of four signs, which are a stage between Egyptian hieroglyphs and Phoenician letters. The four signs, though not finally interpreted, go some way to suggest that the Phoenician alphabet, which is the parent of our own, was derived from Egyptian picture-writing. Palestine, the bridge-land where Egyptians, Canaanites and Phoenicians came together, was the country where the transformation was made.

The finds at Lachish have given, moreover, a living picture of the art and social life of the Canaanite and Judean town over a period of 1000 years before the first captivity. The 1000 years cover the eighth and ninth dynasties of the Egyptian Pharaohs who ruled in Southern Palestine from 1650 to 1200 B.C., and the whole course of the Hebrew State from 1200 to 600 B.C. Lachish was only a small town, on the highway from Egypt to Syria, enclosed within walls of which the circuit is less than a mile. Yet the tombs and the single Temple of the Egyptian period have given works of art and of beautiful workmanship. Besides jewellery of gold and semi-precious stones, which is common in other sites, a series of scarabs and seal rings covers the Kings of the two dynasties. One tomb alone gave nearly 200 seals. It is as though an archaeologist in England had lighted on a store of rings of the Sovereigns of England, from Henry VI to the present day. Each scarab has a different design. In one alligators by the Tree of Life; in another gazelles leaping round a palm; in a third lions rampant. The workmanship of all is delicate and lovely, and gives the irresistible impression of a widespread civilization which 3000 years ago flourished in the 'fertile crescent'.

Not less vivid is the picture of the social life of the town in the last period before its destruction. Below the crust of



lime, which was formed by the burning of the walls, the expedition uncovered a public square within the gates. The square was surrounded by a group of shops with their stores of goods intact. There was a pottery shop and a stall of oil and wine in which were jars bearing the royal Judean stamp. They are marked with the Hebrew words: 'For the King', and with the names of Hebron and other towns. The jars represent the tithe paid in kind, as has been done in the Land of the Bible till the British Mandatory Government changed the tithe for a commuted land tax. The wine-store contained a picturesque strainer, formed of a gazelle's head dotted with holes, which must have been used to suck the wine, as we use a straw. There was a weaver's store: the weights of the looms lay on the floor, together with a large limestone vat for dyeing, and a fragment of a wooden beam that had escaped the burning. And there was a woman's beauty parlour.

It may be asked how the different levels of excavation of these ancient sites are dated. And a word must be said on this subject.

One of the revolutionary facts in the archaeology of our time is the dating of fragments of pottery found on ancient sites. It has become an almost exact science. Pottery is the most indestructible substance of human art, and it is also the most abundant. It may break into a thousand pieces, but does not disappear or disintegrate, like paper or parchment. It is, also, the most mobile substance; and the mariners and migrants of antiquity over land and sea carried with them their pots and jars. So on all ancient sites, both overground and underground, pieces of pottery with different markings and ornaments, jars or fragments of jars, lamps, plates, cooking utensils and the like, are waiting to be picked up and examined. And the skilled eye, the trained hand and the learned detective mind of the archaeologist can read history in them. Today the isotopes of the chemists have come to help in the work of dating. Moreover, pottery was the material most regularly used for inscription or writing in ancient civilization. Sometimes the record is stamped on pottery; sometimes it is written with ink and what was the forerunner of the modern pen. Lachish has given unexpected wealth of both kinds of record. On the very last day of the excavation, before the work had to come to an end, the workers found on a stone of a flight of steps a sketch of a lion and the first five letters of the

Hebrew Alphabet in their correct order. That is, without exception, the earliest example of these letters in their order.

The romance of the discovery of Gezer by the archaeologists is as exciting as the romance of Lachish. And it was one of the first examples in Palestine of thorough scientific excavation which has laid bare layer after layer of civilization. As Professor Macalister, who dug the site for the Palestine Exploration Fund, has put it, the Tell or mound is like a set of book-shelves. In the top shelf you find the record of the last inhabitants; and below it you find a record of the manners and customs of earlier eras, till finally at the bottom you reach the earliest civilization. Here was the habitation of cave-men of the Stone Age. Gezer is frequently mentioned, not only in the Bible as a fortress of the Canaanites and of the Philistines, and then as part of the dowry of the Egyptian princess whom King Solomon married, but also in the books of the Maccabees as the citadel and palace of Simon, the brother of Judah. It is recorded, too, in Egyptian monuments, and in the Letters of Tel Amarna, referred to above. It had, however, disappeared from memory for centuries, and there was no Arab village, or deserted mound, in present-day Palestine bearing the name.

In the latter years of the nineteenth century, however, the brilliant French Archaeologist Consul, Clermont-Ganneau—he who found the inscribed stone in Hezekiah's water-tunnel in Jerusalem—read in an Arab history of the Middle Ages the story of a Beduin raid in the Plain of Sharon. The raiders were pursued to the Mound of Jazar, between Ramleh and Hulda. He had the intuition that Jazar was the Biblical Gezer, because its location in the foot-hills of Judea fitted. The intuition was amazingly confirmed a year later when, searching in the district, he found an inscription on a rock, within a mile of the mound, which he had provisionally identified with Gezer. The stone bore on one side a Greek name, and on the other the Hebrew words, 'boundary of Gezer'. The mound on the adjoining foot-hill was occupied by an Arab village, called Abu-Shushah, with a castellated building. That, however, was not a historic monument but a country house built in the nineteenth century for a banker of Jerusalem.

It was some years later that Professor Macalister began that systematic digging of the mound which he carried on for ten years. And he gave one side-light after another upon the Bible and post-biblical history. Starting at the bottom levels,



he discovered a subterranean water-tunnel, like that beneath ancient Jerusalem. It must have been made by the Canaanites or the pre-Semitic Horites for some purpose of securing the water from the spring deep down in the limestone for the inhabitants in case of siege. The descent to the tunnel is nearly 100 feet, and is carried by 80 steps. Then Macalister found traces of animal and human sacrifice, and of a spectacular High Place. The seven erect stones, which formed the centre of worship, were still intact, and they were the most perfect example of a Canaanite shrine yet revealed. We may compare it with the Stonehenge of England, though it is comparatively tiny. In these lower levels, too, he found many scarabs and other relics of the Egyptian occupation. One of the scarabs was of the Pharaoh Amenhotep of the fifteenth century B.C. (1411-1375), who is believed by many to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. He found, too, many figures of Astarte, the Goddess of Canaanite worship.

On a higher level he found two cuneiform tablets in the Assyrian script recording contracts of sale. They are both dated by scholars as of the seventh century B.C., and on one of them the name of the vendor is the Hebrew Nathaniah. The use of the Assyrian language would seem to show that the town was then occupied by the Assyrian invader, perhaps Sennacherib, who also captured Lachish. What was still more exciting was the finding of an inscribed stone with Hebrew characters. It proved to be a table of the calendar, made by or for a cultivator about 800 B.C. The wording, which is incomplete, runs: "Month of ingathering; month of sowing; month of pulling up of flax; month of reaping of barley; month of gathering the summer fruit." But the names of the months are not given.

Another chance-finding in the debris revealed dramatically the capture of the fortress by the Maccabean Simon, the youngest brother of Judah. It was an inscription in Greek, bearing the name of one Pampras, and the words: 'may fire pursue Simon's palace'. And the scholar's interpretation is that this is a magic tablet designed to wreak revenge, and scribbled by one of the captured Greek officers or inhabitants of the fortress when the Jewish Army conquered it. The Maccabean home of Modin, where the brothers were buried, is not many miles away.

In the Books of the Maccabees, Gezer appears with its



Graecised name Gazara. Besides this magic tablet, the excavator found a votive altar with a Greek inscription, dedicated to the Greek god, Herakles (Hercules), on one side, and on the other to Jehovah, written in its Greek form. The altar is a typical example of that attempt to fuse Judaism with the Greek paganism, against which the Maccabees fought their heroic and decisive struggle. Gezer was presumably destroyed and razed in the struggle against the Romans. The town does not figure in the Talmud or in other rabbinical literature of the Jews. It appears next in history as the Crusaders' fortress of Gisart. And part of their wall can be traced in the upper levels of the site.

Today the Hill has resumed its ancient name, and on its slopes and in the Plain below it there has risen a Jewish collective village, Gezer-Hadassah. The Arab village of Abushusheh was abandoned by its inhabitants in the struggle for the independence of Israel. The site had been acquired in the early part of this century by the Sire of Jewish agricultural settlement in the Land of Israel, Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Then, shortly before the First World War, a portion of it was transferred to an English Zionist enterprise, the Maccabean Company, which planned to settle a group of English Jews on this historic site of Israel and the Maccabees. The village and the hill-top were held, indeed, by the Turks as a strong-point during that war, and a sharp engagement was fought. In Allenby's advance up the Coastal Plain from Gaza to Jerusalem in November 1917, the English yeomanry stormed the position. In the period between the World Wars, the land itself was transferred to the Jewish National Fund. That body, established by the Zionists, had become the principal holder of land in Palestine and held it as the possession of the Jewish people. The settlers came from many countries; many of them had their agricultural training in a children's village on the spurs of Carmel, which was conducted by the Hadassah Organization of America. Hence the name Hadassah, which is now combined with Gezer.

The village played a part in the battle for the road to Jerusalem during the War of Independence. So here, too, the continuity of history is signally illustrated, from the dawn of civilization to the first coming of the Children of Israel, their struggle with the Philistines and with Assyrian invaders, and again with the Hellenistic enemies of Judaism, down to the

beginning of the return to the Land in our time, and to the fight for independence. The ancestral memory of the Jew is constantly stirred in the Land of Israel.

A third place in the foot-hills is enshrined in Jewish history, but has not yet been the scene of the same thorough archaeological exploration, or given up all its record. It is the traditional site of the home and burial-place of the Maccabees, that family which, in the second century before the Christian era, asserted the independence of the Jewish people against the tyranny of the Hellenistic kings of Syria, and stood up for Judaism against a debased paganism. In the Apocrypha Book of the Maccabees the place is called Modin, and it is identified with a small (former) Arab village of Midyeh, north-east of the town of Lydda, and overlooking the Philistine plain. Like Gezer, it is in the Vale of Ajalon, where Joshua fought the Canaanite kings and bade the sun stand still. The region is full of caves, gaping black dens for men and cattle, and of dry wells that offer hiding-places. The Vale of Ajalon has, throughout history till the most recent times, been the easiest passage from the coast to Jerusalem, though now the high-road from Jaffa to Tel-Aviv goes a more direct way. Midyeh is built on the crest of a hill above that road commanding a view of the sea twenty miles to the east.

Mattathias, the father of the Maccabee brothers and a priest of the Temple, had retired to his native village when the ritual of the service of the one God was forbidden by the King Antiochus, and was replaced by worship of idols. The emissary of the king came to Modin, set up idols there, and called on the people to worship them on pain of death. Mattathias struck him down and proclaimed a revolt. He died, and his eldest son Judah, leading a guerilla band of patriots, fought the Syrian hosts in the narrow defiles and routed them. A few years later, after he had captured Jerusalem and restored the service of the Temple, and after he had concluded an alliance with the all-powerful republic of Rome, he fell in battle. He was buried by the side of his father in their native village, and later the bones of his brothers who carried on the fight to victory were buried there. The Book of the Maccabees records how:

"Simon built a monument upon the sepulchre of his father and his brethren, and raised it aloft with polished stone behind and before. And he set up seven pyramids,



one over against another, for his father and his mother and his four brethren. And for these he made cunning devices, setting about them great pillars, and upon the pillars he fashioned all manner of arms for a perpetual memory, and beside the arms ships carved, that they should be seen of all that sail on the sea."

The chronicles of the pilgrims of the Middle Ages till the fourteenth century tell of the Maccabean monument; and the ancient mosaic map of Palestine, found in a Christian church across Jordan (see p. 151), shows the site near Lydda. The pilgrim monk Robert, who wrote at the beginning of the period of the Crusades, described "the tombs at Modin of Mattathias and his sons that still survive". And the English pilgrim, Sir John Mandeville, writing in 1356, tells of "Mount Modeyn where lies the Prophet Maccabaeus". Then came the period of confusion in Palestine, of Mongol and Tartar invasions. The ancient monuments were destroyed and the identity of the sites was lost. The stones were removed piecemeal for the building of the neighbouring towns of Ramleh and Lydda. It was not till 1870 that one of the early field-workers of the Palestine Exploration Fund, coming to the village of Midyeh and being told of the Tombs of the Jews, was convinced that he had found the place of Modin and the remains of the Maccabean mausoleum. For from the Arab village there was a noble prospect towards the sea; and on a ridge were twenty-four tombs with the blocks of a rock apparently prepared for the base of a monument. Then a French archaeologist carried out some rough excavations, and found a burial-chamber paved with the mosaics of red, black and white stones. He thought that he had found the place where the pyramids had been fitted into the building. Some years later Lieutenant Herbert Kitchener visited the village, and while sceptical about the earlier identification of the tombs, was convinced that a round hill surmounted by a rock above the village, which was revered as a Mohammedan Holy Place, was, 'the site of the tombs of the celebrated heroes of later Jewish history'.

Scientific exploration has not yet been undertaken. But Midyeh, which is today just within the territory of Israel, on the border of the Arab territory of Jordan, is a place of an annual ceremony at the beginning of the Maccabean festival in the Winter. That festival, known as Hanuca, or Dedication,



celebrates particularly the restoration of the worship in the Temple by the lighting of the candelabra of eight branches, the Menorah. From the Maccabean village the youth of Israel, running in relays, carry lighted torches to Jerusalem, to Tel-Aviv, and to the other chief towns. And in every home and in every public place the Menorah—now the symbol of the State of Israel—is lit for the eight days of the feast, beginning with one lamp and adding one each day. Modin is the symbol of that spirit by which the Jews won their independence 2100 years ago, and won it again seven years ago. Modin, Gezer and Lachish, all on the Israel border, are today being settled by groups of young men and women who stay on the soil after they finish their National Service. They are again living places.

*Galilee, Samaria and Esdraelon*

GALILEE is a country dear both to Christians and to Jews. It was in Nazareth, a small town in the folds of the Galilean hills, that Jesus lived as a child; and it was by the Sea or Lake of Galilee that He started His preaching and gathered His first disciples. The country was in those days known as Galil Hagoyim, that is in Hebrew, Region—of the Gentiles, because many of its inhabitants were a 'mixed multitude': not Jews, but Greek-speaking pagans. Galilee was then densely populated and embraced many Hellenistic as well as Jewish cities. Kinglake, who wrote in the Victorian age a famous travel-book on the East, *Eothen*, compared the scenery of Galilee with the English Lake District. And he contrasted the desolation, which he found 100 years ago, with the records of the country at the time of Christ. "The Lake of Galilee was then not like a silent Wast-water (one of the English Lakes) lying solitary between lonely hills, but was bordered by towns with temples and villas like Geneva or Como."

It was in Galilee, in the first and second centuries A.D., that the Jewish people, excluded from Jerusalem, had their principal schools. The slopes of the hills are dotted with ruins of their synagogues of the Roman period. They maintained their agricultural villages in Galilee when they were driven out of the rest of the land; and some of those Jewish villages in the inaccessible fastnesses of the mountains remained through the ages. When in 1882 Kitchener, at that time a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, was carrying out a survey of Western Palestine for the Palestine Exploration Fund, he came across one of these mountain villages, Pekiin, and was amazed to find persons talking Hebrew. They were peasants and seemed indistinguishable from the Arab cultivators. They may have been the descendants of Jews who, in the sixteenth century, were planted on the land in Galilee by a famous Jewish diplomat of the Turkish Sultan. Don Joseph, Duke of Naxos—originally a refugee from Spain—obtained from the Sultan a

permit to settle Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal in a corner of the Land of Israel. He was responsible, too, for re-peopleing with Jews the city of Tiberias by the shore of the Lake, and rebuilding its mediaeval walls.

Tiberias had been the seat of a Jewish religious University in the early centuries of the Christian era, and it was there that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament was fixed, and what is called the Jerusalem Talmud was compiled. It was then a Holy town to the Jews. Its name comes from the Roman Emperor, Tiberius, in whose honour it was founded by one of the Herodian Kings in the first century. And it was famous in those days for its hot-springs which possessed, and still possess, healing properties. In our time Tiberias has become a busy centre of the growing Jewish population that now occupies all Galilee.

On a hill-top, 3000 feet above the lake, rises the town of Safed which, like Tiberias, is a Holy City to the Jews. It is identified with the City-set-on-a-Hill of the Gospel. It was beloved by Jewish mystics because, in the early centuries of the common era, the saints and the masters of the Kabbalah, the mystic wisdom, lived in that region. And after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, many of the refugee scholars turned again to it, and made what an English traveller, Biddulph, a merchant of the Levant Company, writing in 1601, described as "the University of the Jews where they speak Hebrew". Another English traveller, George Sandys, writing a few years later, says: "great numbers of Jews affect the place, because Jacob stayed there before going down to Egypt". One of the latter-day Jewish mystics gave another reason for their affection. Here they were away from the Moslem muezzin—who calls the faithful to prayer—and from the sound of the Christian bells. Early in the nineteenth century an earthquake shattered the town; and most of the Jewish schools left for Jerusalem.

For the Crusaders Safed was a natural fortress, and the Knights-Templar held it till Saladin stormed the castle in the twelfth century. For the Turks, too, it was a fortress and a garrison city. But in 1918 it fell without a blow to Allenby's victorious Army. Again in 1948, the Arabs held it as a strong-point, but the Jews stormed it, and the Arab inhabitants fled. Now it is entirely a Jewish town. But in the Galilean Hills, that slope away to the Coastal Plain and the Bay of Acre,



many Arab villages have remained. And today Arab cultivators plough their fields in the traditional way, unchanged from Bible times, side by side with the Jews using tractors and combines.

The one Arab town which remains in Galilee is Nazareth. It is beautifully situated on the hills amid cypresses, vineyards and woods; and vast religious piles of the different Christian churches, monasteries, convents, orphanages and schools rise amid the green. The Well of the Virgin is still thronged by the Arab women filling their pitchers. Most of the 20,000 Arab inhabitants of Nazareth are Christian. But the town is in the State of Israel. A Jewish District Governor sits in the former headquarters of the British Administration of Galilee. And Jewish labour leaders have organized co-operative societies and trade-unions amongst the Arab workers.

Recent archaeological expeditions have enriched beyond expectation our knowledge of Galilee in the first centuries of the Christian era, and disclosed famous historic centres of Jewish learning of which all trace had been lost. Thus, on the southern slopes of the hills of Western Galilee, overlooking the end of the Jezreel Valley, Professor Maisler (Mazar), President of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, found under a Tell the relics of a big synagogue of the second century, a vast cemetery and catacombs of the ancient city of Bet Shearim—meaning the House of Gates.

The finding of the city buried for 1500 years was one of those romantic events which are multiplied in the land where you tread on history. Some years before World War II a watchman of a new Jewish agricultural settlement in these Galilean hills, whilst digging a trench, suddenly lighted on an ancient tomb. He realized that it might have historical importance, and informed the department of Antiquities. A Jewish Archaeological Society sent scholars to explore. They dug in and around the site, and found tombs honeycombing the hills for some miles. Here in the second century, as we know from the Talmudic records, the Jewish Sanhedrin had its seat, and in Bet Shearim lived the famous Rabbi Judah Hanassi, meaning The Prince. He was the Patriarch and spiritual head of the scattered Jewish people and the compiler of the Mishna, the code of oral law which, with the Bible, was through the ages the legal basis, and remains the basis of Jewish religious life.



*Top: Canaanite Temple at Beit Yerah dating from the second millennium B.C. Sea of Galilee in background. (See Ch. IX)*



*Centre: Jewish Catacombs of Beit Shearim near Nazareth. This was a famous burial place of the sages in the first centuries of our era. (See Ch. IX)*



*Bottom: Ruins of Roman Forum at Beit-Shaan. The town was a stronghold of the Canaanites, Egyptians, Philistines, Greeks and Romans. (See Ch IX).*





*Bottom, left:* Village of Kiryat Ananym in Judean Hills. The name means City of Grapes. The rocky slopes have been skilfully terraced (See Ch. VIII)



*Top, right:* Yemenite settlement in Judean foothills. The site is the traditional birth-place of Samson (See Ch. VIII)



*Top, left:* Jewish Settlements in Vale of Esdraelon (Lezroel). The Vale is dotted with co-operative and collective villages (See Ch. IX)

*Bottom, right:* Nazareth Street. Nazareth is a mainly Arab City in Israel and has many churches and convents. (See Ch. IX)



After Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives were denied to the Jews, the town became the chief burial-place for the Jewish leaders, not only in Palestine, but in neighbouring and distant countries. A mausoleum is dedicated to the head of the Council of Elders of Antioch, which was a centre of the Jews as well as of the early Christians. Another grave is of a Jew of Himyar, an ancient settlement in Southern Arabia before the Moslem era. In the Necropolis there are family and communal vaults of Jews from Western Asia and Arabia, from Mesopotamia and Egypt, from Italy and North Africa. Catacombs containing the bones are spread over a large area, extending for miles in the folds of the hills, like those on the outskirts of Rome. It was a Jewish, as well as a Roman, practice in those centuries to place the bones collected after the burial in chambers hewn out of the rock. The underground city of the dead is now being uncovered.

The top of the mound was crowned with the ruins of the Synagogue, which was probably also the seat of the Sanhedrin. An imposing gate with three arches formed the front of the Synagogue; and perhaps that gate gave the name to the town. Or it may have been the hundred doors that opened to the underground catacombs. The catacombs reveal the popular Jewish art of the Roman period, influenced by Hellenistic and Persian models. The walls are decorated with geometric patterns, human and animal figures, ships, and also the Jewish motifs of sacred objects that have been common for 2000 years in their art. There are the Seven-branched Candelabra (Menorah) and the Palm-branch and Citron fruit, which are the emblems of the Feast of Tabernacles, the Ram's Horn (Shofar), which was used in the Temple and Synagogue service. There are, too, representations of the Ark of the Covenant, of Daniel in the lions' den, and of Noah in the Ark. More than 200 inscriptions were found at Bet Shearim. But on the lintels of the door, on the walls above the tombs, and on the slabs, for the most part they give simply the name of the person buried. They are in several languages, Hebrew, Aramaic, Latin; but chiefly are in Greek. They indicate that in that age Jews mingled freely with the other peoples of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, but all looked to Palestine as their religious home.

The work was interrupted by the war for twelve years, but further excavations in 1953 disclosed the tombs of famous

Rabbis of the Sanhedrin of the second century. The Archaeologists lighted on a tomb which they believe to be the burial-place of the Patriarch Judah himself. In one niche there is a slab bearing the name of Rabbi Simeon, and on the other side an inscription: 'This is the tomb of Rabbi Gamaliel.' We know that the two sons of Prince Judah had those names, and scholars believe that here they will find his own tomb.

Bet Shearim was destroyed in the fourth century, when another Jewish revolt in Palestine was ruthlessly crushed by a Roman Emperor, and the centres of learning in Galilee were razed to the ground.

On the shore of the Lake of Galilee a group of villages bear the names which they had in the Gospels, and have relics of those days. Capernaum (the Village of Nahum) is marked by the imposing ruins of a synagogue, but later than that built by the Roman centurion "who loveth our nation". At Chorazin (which the Arabs call Kerazeh) another synagogue stands on the place where Jesus exclaimed: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin." Magdala, from which Mary Magdalene took her name, is the present Jewish fishing and agricultural settlement of Migdal. The ancient synagogues are in the form of the Roman Basilica, with nave and aisles, and the place for the Ark always looks towards Jerusalem. All of them have gaily decorated mosaic floors.

At the southern end of the Sea of Galilee the Jewish Exploration Society has made in recent years one of its most spectacular discoveries. Here is an ancient Canaanite city, which in its oldest levels dates back to 3500 B.C. The mound still bore the Biblical Canaanite name of Bet Yerah, the Temple of the Moon; and it marks a centre of the ancient worship of the peoples of Canaan. The foundations of the Temple have been revealed, and the expedition found golden ornaments and graceful vases decorated with a geometric pattern. Scholars have proved from the pottery fragments that the town was destroyed about 2500 B.C., that is, 1000 years before the Children of Israel came to the land. The site was not occupied again until the Hellenistic age, the third century B.C. In our time one of the earliest Jewish collective agricultural settlements was planted by the site. The collective settlement was moved soon to higher ground, and has become the flourishing Daganian: Place of Corn. Daganian is the Queen of the Kibbutzim; and by the side of



Bet Yerah the Jewish Labour Organization, which is concerned with cultural as well as economic interests of its members, has built a museum to house the finds, and a rest-house where the workers at the same time find tranquillity and pursue knowledge of the past.

From Safed you overlook the second lake of the Lake District of Palestine, to the north of the Sea of Galilee. It is known now as Huleh, but in Bible days was the Waters of Merom. It is formed by the overflow of the waters of the upper Jordan in the flat plain, and it has been for long a sea of reeds and papyrus. It has, too, rich deposits of peat; and its waters are stocked with fish. But large parts are a malarial marsh. Today the lake is in process of being drained in order to turn the greater part of the area into fertile fields for intensive cultivation. The shallow waters of the spreading river will be canalized in a deep channel.

In the far north, by the frontier between Israel and the Lebanon and Syria, the Jordan and its tributaries burst out from the copious springs of Mount Hermon. Jewish villages are multiplied; for here they have all the water they want. In Bible times, also, here was a flourishing countryside; and the Greek city of Baneas (originally Paneas), dedicated to the Greek god, Pan, was famous for its beauty. Now close to the frontier a new village of Dan has been planted on the site of the Biblical place which is the origin of the phrase, 'from Dan to Beersheba'. The phrase means from north to south of the Kingdom, as we might say, from John o'Groats to Land's End. But today Israel's territory extends far south of Beersheba.

The plateau of Central Palestine is Samaria. It is less fertile and less lovely than Galilee, and it has no lakes. Nor has it been developed in the latest period like Galilee, because it has remained almost entirely an Arab 'reserve', and Jewish settlement has not penetrated its hills and valleys. The plateau stands between 2000 and 3000 feet above the sea. The highest points are Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, on the two sides of the principal town that is now called Nablus. In Bible days the town was Shekhem, where the Patriarch Jacob pitched his tent. The Arab name—like Italian Naples—comes from the Greek—Neapolis—meaning the new city and goes back to the time of the Roman conquest. Nablus lies in the midst of a well-watered and very fertile plain between the



two mountains; and the Arabs know it as 'the little Damascus'. (The chief town of Syria is similarly situated.) The Well of Jacob on the outskirts of the town is sacred to the Moslems and also to the Christian Church. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus on His way from Galilee to Judea rested there, and met the Samaritan woman. A Christian church was built by the Well in the twelfth century by the Crusaders.

Palestine was divided in antiquity, as well as today, into two States. For after the reign of King Solomon, the northern tribes of Israel rebelled against Judah and created the State of Israel. The capital of Judah was Jerusalem; the capital of Israel was at first Shekhem. Later it was moved by King Omri to a city which was a stronger fortress, ten miles to the north. In the Bible it is called Samaria. But after the Greek conquest of the Middle East, it was occupied by Greek colonists. In the first century B.C. it was rebuilt by Herod, and renamed Sebaste, meaning 'Honoured'. Its modern Arab name is Sebastiyeh.

Archaeologists, digging by the Arab village in the ruins of the Israelite and Herodian temples and palaces, discovered in them beautiful fragments of carved ivory, which must have been part of the Ivory House of King Ahab of Israel and his Tyrian Queen, Jezebel. (1 Kings xxii, 39.) Some of the panels were covered with gold and inlaid with blue enamel. They may have been portions of the couches, of which the Prophet Amos wrote: "They lay on beds of ivory, and stretched themselves on their couches." Some fragments are carved sphinxes, exactly like the ivories found in the Palace of Nineveh.

The excavations at Sebastiyeh gave also potsherds with a geometrical pattern and with Greek inscriptions. Greek traders from the Ionian Coast of Asia Minor may have penetrated to the Kingdom of Israel; or perhaps Phoenician traders of Tyre—Jezebel's city—brought back this pottery from their voyages.

When the Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in 738 B.C., and its people were taken into captivity to Assyria, Samaria was peopled by the soldiers and colonists of the northern Empire. They were pagans, and brought their own gods to worship. But some of the priests of Israel returned, and taught them the Laws of Moses. They built a Temple on Mount Gerizim, which they claimed to be the place where the

Law of Moses was revealed. The Samaritans, as they were now called, were hostile to the Jews of Judea who were allowed to return a little later to Jerusalem by the Persian King Cyrus after the Captivity in Babylon. And we are told in the Bible Book of Ezra and Nehemiah how they opposed the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. Henceforth, there were not two Kingdoms in Palestine, but there were two rival religions, both derived from the Hebraic teaching and both following the Mosaic Law. The one had its centre at Jerusalem, the other at Shekhem.

The Samaritans asserted that their priests were the true descendants of Aaron; and they have continued to our day—so they claim—to appoint High Priests from the same family. At one time, in the early centuries of the Christian era, they were a big community with congregations scattered over the Roman Empire, rivalling the Jews, and carrying on a separate religious mission. Like the Jews, they were involved many times in war with the Romans; and their Temple on Mount Gerizim was destroyed in the second century, like the Temple of Jerusalem. It was replaced by a Temple of Jupiter on the mountain. When the Roman Empire became Christian, they, too, were persecuted by the Church. And their community dwindled. Throughout the ages, however, they preserved their religious centre, and after the Arab conquest they lived on good terms with the Moslem Arabs. In the course of time their numbers dwindled to a few thousand, and in our own day they fell to a few hundred souls, a 'museum piece' of a community.

Till the Jewish-Arab War of Independence, they continued at every Passover to go up Mount Gerizim, and offer there the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb, on a slab of rock, which is traditionally the Altar of their old Temple. The religious survival of the Passover ceremony tended in the period of the British Mandate to become a commercialized performance. The number of curious onlookers increased as the number of celebrants diminished. The Samaritans have, moreover, ancient scrolls of the Law of Moses, written in an antique Hebrew script, and claimed by them to be the oldest manuscripts of the Mosaic books and to be written by a great-grandson of the first High Priest Aaron.

One other place besides Shekhem in the Samarian plateau played a vital part in the religious history of Israel. It is Shiloh, which was their first sanctuary in Canaan, and the



place where Joshua divided the land of Canaan between the tribes after the conquest (Jos. xviii, 8). There the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle rested till the days of Saul, and there the Prophet Samuel ministered to Eli, the High Priest, and had the revelation. The site of Shiloh was identified by archaeologists next to the Arab village of Seilun, twenty miles south of Nablus. Here were some outwardly unimpressive ruins of the early centuries, a basilica and a pilgrim church, which is believed to have been originally a synagogue. A Danish expedition explored the site, and proved that the walls of the old Canaanite city had been destroyed by fire about 1000 B.C. The destruction was probably wrought by the Philistines during the constant warfare with Israel for the possession of these hills and valleys, in the days of the Prophet Samuel and King David. The Prophet Jeremiah takes the destruction as a symbol of the divine punishment: "Go ye to my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel." (Jer. vii, 12.)

Shiloh flourished again as a Christian settlement in the early centuries of the common era, when the holy sites of the Old Testament acquired a new reverence. And Jewish medieval travellers tell of a shrine which was there, around the tomb of 'Joseph the Just', that is, the Patriarch Joseph. Today Shiloh is in the Arab Kingdom, and outside the area of Jewish settlement.

In recent years Jewish archaeologists in Israel, digging in mounds of Galilee and Samaria and Judea, have lighted on several Samaritan Synagogues. They are readily identified, because the inscriptions are written in the Samaritan Hebrew script. Their buildings also are oriented on Mount Gerizim and not on Jerusalem. One of these synagogues was found in the outskirts of Jaffa; another outside Nazareth, a third, more recently (1953), at the village of Rehoboth where Dr. Weizmann lived.

The Arab-Jewish struggle of the last years has made the slender Samaritan remnant look more kindly on their Jewish kin, and drop the old hostility. Of their tiny group a few families are living in the State of Israel; and it may be that, when peace is made between Israel and Jordan, the rest will leave Nablus, that is now in the Kingdom of Jordan. Yet it is hard to conceive that they will altogether abandon, after 3000 years, their Holy Place on Mount Gerizim.



Nablus itself was a stronghold of Arab nationalism throughout the period of the British Mandate. It was the Headquarters of the Arab revolt against the British Administration during the years 1936-39. Today, it is the third city in the Arab State of Jordan, next in importance to the capital, Amman, and the Arab Jerusalem.

Between Galilee and Samaria runs the central valley of Palestine. In the Bible it is called Jezreel, and today is known by the Jews simply as Emek, the Hebrew word for valley. The Jews of Israel have a special affection for it, because it was a main centre of their agricultural development in the thirty years of British rule, before the creation of the State. Formerly it was marshy and malarial and sparsely inhabited. Now it is intensively cultivated and dotted with prosperous Jewish collective and co-operative villages. It is, too, teeming with memories of the history of ancient Israel in the days of the Judges, of Saul and David, Solomon and Ahab, Elijah and Josiah. The largest of the modern settlements, Ain Harod, is built by the copious spring of that name, where Gideon tested his warriors to see whether they lapped or scooped up the water with their hands.

At another settlement near the Jordan Valley, Beth Alpha, the pioneer farmers, ploughing the fields, lighted on the mosaic floor of an ancient synagogue which is dated in the reign of the Roman Emperor Justin (about A.D. 500). The mosaic, showing signs of the Zodiac and Abraham's offering of Isaac, throws light on Jewish popular art during those centuries. In the Byzantine Age their art was Byzantine; and the picture on the floor compares with the mosaics of ancient churches. It bears inscriptions in three languages, Hebrew, Aramaic or Syrian—which was the popular language of the Middle East at that time, and spoken by Jesus and the Apostles—and Greek. While the medieval and the modern synagogues have eschewed any painting of the human form and any graven image, in the early centuries of the Christian era the Rabbis, it seems, permitted mosaic ornament with human figures. And the mosaics portray vividly the life of bygone ages. It is characteristic of the archaeology of Palestine to give a sense of continuity, homeliness and intimate connection of the ancient life with the rebirth of the land in our day.

The most striking place historically in the Vale of Esdraelon is the small but growing town of Beth-Shaan, at its eastern end.

In the Hebrew Bible it has that name, meaning Temple of the Serpent; but the Arabs knew the place as Baisan. The modern town is spread around a flat-topped hill, which is a skyscraper of history and rises suddenly above the Jordan Valley. The hill has been thoroughly excavated in modern times, and revealed layer upon layer of ruined towns that date from 2000 years before the Christian era. The 'Mound of the Fortress' is a series of citadels imposed one on the other, and ranging from the early Bronze Age (about 2000 B.C.) to the Arab conquest in the seventh century of the Christian era.

The most spectacular finds have been the structures of Egyptian temples with monumental tablets—Steles—recording the exploits of the conquering Pharaohs. One of these monuments records in hieroglyphs the victories of Seti I (about 1300), whose mummy reposes in the Sir John Soane Museum in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Another bears the picture of Rameses II, who reigned about thirty years later. The monument shows him with the Egyptian god, Amen Ra. Another monument bears the name and picture of an Egyptian officer who was overseer of the granaries of Pharaoh at Beth-Shaan and steward of the Castle. By a remarkable coincidence a papyrus fragment, unearthed in Egypt, records the name of this officer, and is a memorandum addressed to him by his successor in office, asking for information. The text is in these words: "O, Scribe, to whom nothing is unknown. You are sent on an expedition at the head of a victorious army. You do not know how to ration them. The army want to start. But there is no bread. Teach me about Beth-Shaan. How is the Jordan crossed? Tell me about the crossing of the waters of Megiddo." This fragment of antiquity throws a vivid light on the Egyptian rule over Palestine 3500 years ago. Here is an officer in Egypt trying to obtain information from an expert about the distant country to which he expects to be posted.

Beth-Shaan was one of the strong fortresses of the Philistines, when the Egyptian rule over Palestine was interrupted by their invasion from the sea. It was on the walls of Beth-Shaan that King Saul's body was hung after his defeat by the Philistines. The strong place was captured by King Solomon, but after the death of that strong King the Egyptians again conquered it in 926 B.C. Then the Assyrians held it after the Kingdom of Israel had fallen. In the seventh or sixth century B.C., it was seized by invaders from Northern Europe, the



Scythians, who suddenly burst on the Middle East, but did not stay long. They gave their name, however, to the city when it was rebuilt by the Greeks after their conquest of the Persian Empire. For many centuries it was known as Scythopolis, till the Arabs brought back its ancient name. And it was one of the strong-points of Hellenistic civilization. The ruins of Temples and statues from that era have been recovered by the archaeologists. From the Roman time are a vast theatre and a hippodrome where the early Christians were martyred. From the Byzantine period we have the ruins of a large circular church; and then, from a later age, the ruins of a Crusader castle.

It was after the Crusaders were driven from Palestine by the Saracens that one of the decisive battles of the world was fought close to Beth-Shaan. In the year 1260, the Mongol invaders, whose hordes from Central Asia had overrun a great part of the Arab Empire, and destroyed the Arab civilization of Iraq, were routed there by the Mameluke Sultan from Egypt, at the Battle of the River Jalud; and their devastating invasion was stayed. In the nineteenth century the village of Beth-Shaan—once a proud town—had fallen to a low estate. An early German traveller, writing in 1806, described it as "a miserable village of twenty houses". Today it is rapidly recovering its dignity as the centre of one of the most populous and prosperous regions of Israel. Jewish agricultural settlement is spread in an area which is rich in water. Several collective groups in the Baisan Valley by the Jordan have been founded by groups of religious Jews who combine study with cultivation of the soil.

The other place of outstanding historical importance in the Vale of Jezreel is the Hill of Megiddo, part of the ridge which bounds it on the southern side, where the mountains of Ephraim or Samaria rise suddenly from the plain. Megiddo—the Biblical Armageddon, *Ar* meaning Hill—commands the mouth of the pass which leads from the Vale to the coastal plain. Like Beth-Shaan, it has been the scene of many decisive battles. And General Allenby, who sent his cavalry through the pass to cut off the Turkish Army in 1918, took his title from it at the end of the First World War as Viscount Allenby of Megiddo. In the New Testament Book of Revelations Armageddon is the place where the final battle of mankind will be fought.



The Hill of Megiddo is another skyscraper of history. An archaeological expedition of the University of Chicago some twenty years ago exposed the history layer by layer. Working backwards through the ages, it uncovered first the Arab, then the Byzantine, then the Roman, and then the Hebrew layer. The last displayed solid walls four metres thick, and a vast system of stables where King Solomon kept his war chariots and their horses. There were stalls for 400 horses, tethering pillars and mangers, which still contained some ears of barley and wheat from the horses' feed of 3000 years ago. The Seal of Solomon was engraved on the wall, and another seal was found and inscribed: 'Shema, Officer of Jeroboam'. The workmanship was Phoenician, and the masonry was like that of the relic of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. There was, too, a water-tunnel 1000 feet long, constructed like Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem, to ensure the water-supply in case of a siege.

Beneath the Hebrew layer the expedition came to a lower and more ancient level, which showed an Egyptian occupation of the fifteenth century B.C. The site was then dominated by a palace of the Pharaohs who had conquered Palestine. It was at Megiddo that Thothmes III in 1479 defeated the Hyksos invaders, and captured '1000 cities' after that decisive victory. That layer contained a treasure-trove of intrinsic value and beauty. It included a gold bowl in the form of a skull, a jar of serpentine for a woman's cosmetics, and a collection of carved ivories, representing animals and human and divine figures, sphinxes and clowns, men and birds, Maltese crosses and cart-wheels. The ivories and the pottery show how the art and culture of Mesopotamia, Assyria and Egypt all converged in this hill above the central plain of Palestine. The line of the poet, Thomas Hardy, which concludes a poem on Allenby's victory at Megiddo, is apt:

"Yea, strange things and spectral may men have beheld in Jezreel!"

One of the surprises for the lay visitor is the small area and the proximity of the famous sites of Antiquity. Thus Megiddo, the great fortress, and one of the seats of power of the Egyptian Pharaohs and of King Solomon, covers only five hectares, about thirteen acres. Not many miles from it, on the

same ridge which commands the Vale of Esdraelon, is the equally famous fortress of Taanach. The Bible mentions it in the song of Victory after the Battle of Deborah and Barak against the hosts of Sisera (Judges v, 19). It appears often also on the Egyptian monuments, and it was one of the bastions guarding the Great North Road of antiquity, the Way of the Sea, which led along the coast of Sinai and Sharon, as far as Mount Carmel, then turned inland across the pass to the vale which led down to the Jordan, and then crossing the river climbed to the uplands of Syria and Damascus.

## CHAPTER X

### *The Negev*

MORE than half the territory of Israel, and nearly half the area of Palestine west of the Jordan, is the arid region known as the Negev. That is a Hebrew word meaning both south and arid, or parched, and it was applied in the Bible to this dry steppe which extends from Beersheba to the peninsula and wilderness of Sinai. In the political division of the Mandated country of Palestine between Israel and the Arab States, which was made by the Assembly of the United Nations in 1947, the Negev was allotted to Israel, with the exception of a small fringe along the Mediterranean coast from Gaza—the old Philistine city—to the Egyptian frontier. And that fringe is today occupied by the Egyptians and 200,000 Arab refugees.

The Negev is Israel's main land-reserve for settlement of immigrants on the soil; it is the one part of her territory which gives a sense of spaciousness. Today most of it is empty. It is a pearl-shaped triangle of territory on the north-eastern side of the Sinai peninsula, stretching from the Mediterranean coast to the shore of the Gulf of Akaba, which runs up from the Red Sea. The Gulf forms the eastern shore of the peninsula of Sinai, as the Gulf of Suez and the Suez Canal—that tiny strip of blue water which separates Egypt and Africa from Western Asia—form the western shore. In days of antiquity the Gulf of Akaba was one of the main sea-ways, and it may be that again.

At the Gulf four States meet within a semicircle of twenty miles. They are Israel and Egypt on the western side; the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Saudi Arabia on the eastern. At the north end of it a town of Akaba or Elath—its Biblical name—has been an important place of maritime and trans-desert trade from Bible times. The strong kings of Judah—Solomon, Jehosaphat and Uzziah—had at Elath the port whence their ships set out for Ophir, the land of the Queen of Sheba, and for Tarshish, which may be Spain. Here, centuries later, the Maccabean kings had their outlet to the sea. Here, in the early centuries of the Christian era, the



Romans, renaming it Aila, had their port for triremes and galleys sailing the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. And here, 1000 years later, the Crusaders launched their galleys, to fight the Saracen corsairs. When the Christians were expelled, the place became an important station of the Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca.

The Romans called this part of their eastern provinces Arabia Petraea, or Stony Arabia. They stationed at Akaba (Aila) one of their legions to impose peace on the tribes of the desert. In those early centuries of the common era the northern part of the Negev was populous. For they built there one of the main trading highways of the Empire, to link Syria and Arabia with Egypt and North Africa. And along the road were townships whose inhabitants brought the arid land into cultivation, by making reservoirs and cisterns to store the water. The Romans and the Nabatean Arabs were skilled water engineers. The problem of cultivation in the Negev had always been, and is today, how to store water in that short rainy season of winter, so as to cultivate the soil during the ten dry months of the year and supply the needs of a settled population. When a strong Power has ruled the area, that problem has been solved. The remains of the Roman and Byzantine cities—represented today by the impressive ruins and castles of Esbeita, Abda, Khalassa, Asluj, and others—bear witness to their achievement. When there has been no strong Power, the nomad Arabs from the Desert, the Bedouin, have grazed their camels and herds on the sparse cultivation, and the invading sands have overwhelmed and filled up the cisterns and the reservoirs. The Bedu, it is said, is not only the child but also the father of the Desert. And in the Negev you realize that 'only a few inches of soil maintain the world'.

In the years immediately before the outbreak of the First World War, two young British Archaeologists, (Colonel) T. E. Lawrence and (Sir) Leonard Woolley, both destined to gain great fame, one as the hero of the Arab revolt in the Desert and the author of one of the greatest of War-books, the other as the excavator of Chaldea and other famous sites of antiquity, explored the Negev. It was part of the wilderness of Zin, the land of the wanderings of the Children of Israel, when they came out of Egypt. They described the Biblical sites—which still often keep their Bible names—and they described also the many monasteries and convents, which had been scattered over

the area in the early centuries of the Christian era. In one of the ruined cities alone they estimated that 10,000 people may have lived in an age when material wants were small and men's thoughts were centred on religious exercises. A later expedition of archaeologists, in the period between the Wars, brought back a hoard of literary records of the third and fourth century of the Christian era. They were in the form of papyrus rolls, and they throw a vivid light on the legal and social conditions of the time. They were written mostly in Greek, but a few are in Latin—including copies of Virgil; and others in Arabic are among the earliest written records in that language.

In recent years the Negev has been more thoroughly explored by Professor Nelson Glueck, formerly of the American School of Jerusalem. Before the State of Israel was established, he had surveyed the country east of Jordan and identified scores of Biblical sites. He has traced at least fifty inhabited places of the early centuries of the Christian era, and shown that the inhabitants were skilled farmers and water engineers. He identifies these settlers with the Nabateans from across Jordan. They built terraces and canalized the rainfall from the slopes to the terraces. They made the desert blossom so that it provided sustenance for a large population. Well-guarded highways linked up the settlements; and on some of them Roman milestones were found.

The Negev is one of the man-made deserts which negligence has multiplied in the Middle East. An area of an industrious population of cultivators in antiquity became a barren and empty waste. The epoch of the Crusaders brought a temporary revival. The Frank knights, like the Romans, were concerned to keep open the routes between Egypt and Syria and between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea. They were strong rulers, built castles on some of the high places, and restored the cisterns and the cultivation. They occupied, too, an island in the Gulf, which before them was held by Jews, and which they called Graye—though the Arabs know it as Pharaoh's Island. Then in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman conquerors, having extended their sway to the Red Sea, rebuilt the Crusader fortress of Akaba, and Sultan Selim left his stamp upon it. But the Negev itself was desolate and derelict, occupied only by a few nomad tribes.

Coming to modern times, the strategic importance of the Negev and the Gulf of Akaba was recognized after the Suez



Canal had become the international oceanway from Europe to the East. The Sultan of Turkey, the notorious Abdul Hamid, who felt that Egypt was lost to his Empire by the British occupation, sought to strengthen his hold over the alternative route to the Red Sea by the Gulf. Schemes were broached for the making of a second Canal from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. It would be dug from Gaza on the coast of Palestine to the Gulf of Akaba, by way of the Araba. The Sultan aimed to cut off Egypt's—which meant England's—access to the Gulf. In 1904 the Turks seized an Egyptian post by the shore, claiming it as within the Sultan's frontier according to the treaty which had recognized the Egyptian Khedive as a semi-independent ruler. The firmness of Lord Cromer, then the British Diplomatic Agent in Egypt, and a demonstration of the British Navy made the Turks retire, and restore the strip of the Sinai eastern shore to Egypt. Another motive of the Turkish aggression was a reported scheme under British auspices to settle Russian Jews in the neighbourhood of Akaba. That made the suspicious Sultan apprehensive of an attempt by the Jews to establish a base of operations for recovering a Jewish State in Palestine.

Foiled at the coast of Akaba, the Turks sought to strengthen their position in the interior of the Negev against possible invasion from Egypt. With the help of German engineers—the German Emperor being regarded as an Ally of the Sultan—they laid a railway from the coastal plain of Palestine to Beersheba. That town built on the old Bible site, which was famous for its wells, was made the centre of the nomad Arab tribes who lived in the Negev. It was the one town in Palestine which was planned in a modern way. In the First World War, when the Turks allied themselves with the Germans, Beersheba was a base of operations for their attack on the Suez Canal and the British Army defending it. The Turks advanced their railway into the heart of the Negev, some fifty miles south of Beersheba, to a ruined Byzantine town, now known as Auja Hafir. Amid the fallen pillars and relics of churches, they built railway sheds, a market, a hospital and a school; and erected a monumental column to record their exploit. Their army of invasion advanced to the Canal in 1915, and again in 1916; but each time was repelled. The embankment of the railway and bridges half-destroyed by British bombers bear witness to the outburst of activity. And in 1948



military activity was renewed around this post in the desert, when the Israel Army, which had driven the Egyptians out of the northern section of the Negev, threatened to advance across the Egyptian frontier line. At the bidding of the Security Council of the United Nations, however, they called a halt; the area was demilitarized, but Auja Hafir was left in Israel's possession.

Beersheba is an older town than Jerusalem. Its name, meaning perhaps the Well of the Oath, is ascribed in the Bible to the covenant which the Patriarch Abraham made there with the Canaanite—or Hittite—Chieftain. Its wells of fresh water made it an important stage on the road between Syria and Egypt along which the armies constantly passed. Today it rises white and new from the grey and brown Desert. In the First World War Beersheba was captured by General Allenby on October 31st, 1917, after a brilliant cavalry action, and a bust of the English General was erected in the municipal garden to commemorate the event. The plinth of the statue remains, but the bust has gone. A British war cemetery is laid out on the outskirts of the town and is well tended.

During the thirty years of the British Mandate, Beersheba kept its place as the centre of administration of the Negev; and it was also the seat of the tribal courts, composed of Sheikhs, who judged the cases of the nomad Arabs according to their customs. The number of the Bedouin in the Negev in those days was estimated at 60,000. But the effect of firm rule and the growing prosperity of the country was to induce many of the tribal Arabs to give up wandering and turn to regular cultivation.

Since the creation of the State of Israel, Beersheba has become a more important town than it ever was in the past. It is the administrative centre and the market-place of the whole Negev. Its former Arab inhabitants have departed; but already it has a population of nearly 20,000 Jews from many countries; and the number grows each month. A glass industry and factories for pottery and plastics, which use local raw materials, have been planted there. The new town is well planned: trees line the main streets; the former mosque is turned to a museum of archaeology and folk-arts; and a new cinema and house of culture is reputed to be the best in Israel.

Some of the Bedu Arabs, who previously were the main population, have permanent encampments in the neighbour-



*Top, left: Omayyad Palace, near Jericho  
(See Ch. XI)*

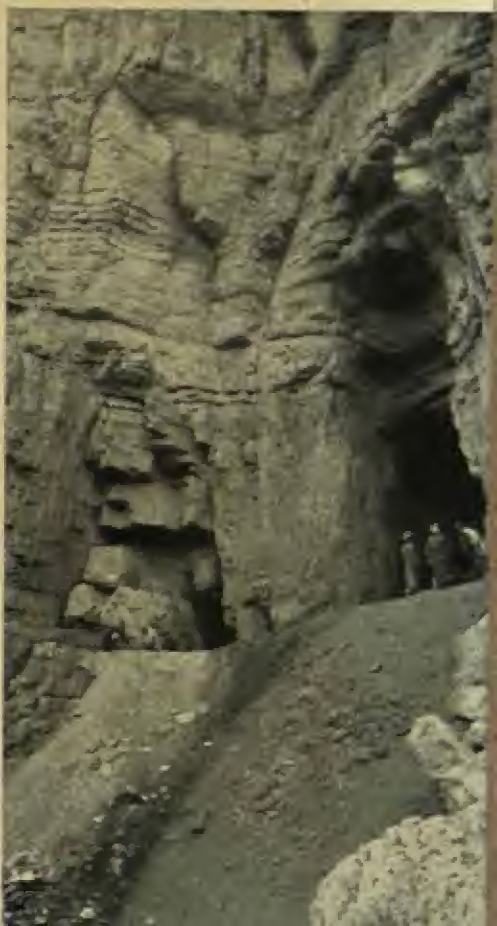


*Top, right: Mosaic Floor in Palace.  
The palace built by the Caliph of the  
Moslem Empire in the eighth century  
is beautifully decorated (See Ch. XI)*



*Above: Byzantine Bath at Abda in  
the Negev. In the early centuries here  
was a Christian town. (See Ch. X)*

*Right: Caves by Dead Sea in which  
the earliest Hebrew manuscripts  
known were found in recent years.  
(See Ch. XI)*





*Above: The Coils of the Jordan, which twists like a serpent in the abyss. (See Ch. XII)*



*Above: The Gorge of Petra, Wadi Mousa. Entrance to "the rose-red city half as old as time". (See Ch. XII)*

*Below: Road from Heersheba to Sedom, built 1932. It descends 3000 feet to the lowest point in the world. (See Ch. XI)*





hood, and come to the market with their camels. But the undulating plain that stretches away for miles is now sown with Jewish agricultural villages, which are introducing modern scientific methods of dry farming. They dam up the flood waters that descend from the mountains in the few days of heavy winter rains, so as to conserve a part and to be able to irrigate their fields in the dry season. Larger irrigation schemes are being undertaken. Pipes have been laid from the coastal plain, where artesian wells tap the subterranean waters.

A more daring venture must await for its execution the making of peace between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan. It is to lead the waters of the Jordan and its tributaries by canals to the arid southern plain. Meantime a hopeful experiment is being carried out by the Israel Institute of Scientific Research—named after the late President, Dr. Weizmann—for de-salting the brackish water, which is found in plenty under the surface of the Negev. The man-made desert may be unmade by man's scientific skill. Yet another experiment is to condense the moisture in the air by mounds of pebbles which make tiny catchment areas, so that, in the Bible phrase, they "turn flints into fountains of water". A Jewish village near Beersheba has appropriately the name 'Revivim', meaning drops of water. These experiments have already had good result.

It was only in 1947 that the Jews began to settle in any number in the Negev; and already fifty co-operative villages and collective farms are established. The settlers come from all parts of the world, and Greater Beersheba is a cosmopolitan town. French is commonly heard in the streets, because many immigrants have come from French North Africa, Morocco and Tunis. It is, too, an industrial centre. The raw materials for its industries of glass, pottery and plastics are near at hand in the central Negev. In that amazing landscape, which looks like a range of mountains of the moon, there are vast deposits of phosphate rock, glass-sands and ceramic clays. They are mingled together at a fantastic place called in Hebrew 'Mactesh', the Great Crater, which recalls the Bible description: "The foundations of the world were laid bare, and the earth was rocked and cleaved asunder." It is a sudden gash in the hills, with the shape of a gigantic oval, produced by some primeval disturbance. The crater is a huge bowl, 75 square kilometres in area, ringed by bare hills 600 feet high

and of rainbow colours. Some are blue and black, containing iron; others are red and green, containing copper. Bare white patches are of glass sand, and cream patches of china clay. The area is seared by dry riverbeds which, for a few days in the year, after heavy winter rains, become roaring torrents carrying down rocks and sand. There are two similar craters nearby. One is ten times the size: the other, much smaller, is scenically the most dramatic, for the deep hole is surrounded by sheer cliffs of 1000 feet. The whole area is the outcome of ages of erosion, the soil being torn away and carried to the plain which runs from the southern end of the Dead Sea to the Red Sea.

Near the entrance of the craters is a famous Bible site. It is the well of Hagar, the Patriarch Abraham's bondwoman and the mother of Ishmael. There she found water when she was driven into the wilderness: "And she filled the child's bottle and gave the lad drink." Today roads have been driven across the crater to carry the glass-sand and clays and iron-ore that are being extracted for the glass, plastic and mineral industries in Beersheba and Haifa. A mining enterprise on a big scale is being conducted, too, a few miles from the crater. On the ridge of the hills that forms one of the containing walls are vast deposits of phosphate rock. The face of the landscape is being changed as the creamy seams are cut out by bulldozers and scrapers, and then passed through towering separators and sifting-plant into the trucks that transport them to the factories to be turned into fertilizers. In primeval times these white hills were a deep lagoon. You see shells and fish bones in the white mass, but as you touch them they crumble into dust.

Another place of scenic grandeur in the Central Negev became notorious in 1954, when the Arabs ambushed there a bus carrying Jews from Elath to Beersheba. It is a high point on the road, commanding the descent from the plateau to the Araba plain deep below sea-level. It preserves its biblical name Ma'alalah Akrabim, meaning the ascent of the scorpions. It is mentioned in the Bible where the boundaries of the Promised Land are described. "And your border shall turn from the South to the ascent of Akrabim, and pass to Zin." From it you survey the whole mysterious waste between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Akaba. On the top of the pass are the remains of a fortress which the Romans built to guard the road.

The Southern Negev is rich in the heavier minerals, fitting the description of the Bible, "a land whose stones are iron, and



out of whose hills you dig copper". This was the region of King Solomon's Mines; and the smelting ovens of the copper and iron, which the King worked with slave-labour, are still traced on several of the hill-tops. The smelting ovens were a regular refinery of ancient days. The site was chosen where the north wind, blowing down from the Dead Sea and the Araba, was strongest. And flues were constructed above the hearth on the principle of the blast furnace. Intense heat must have been generated for the smelting. It is notable that today at Elath windmills have been erected with a purpose of generating electricity by the power of the northern winds.

Before the First World War American engineers were prospecting in this region for petroleum, "the underground and revolutionary wealth of the Middle East". It has been proved to exist, but has not yet been worked commercially. The first drilling was made in the Autumn of 1953. If it is found in commercial quantity, one of Israel's major economic problems will be solved.

The principal port for the minerals extracted in the Negev will be a new Elath on the western shore. At the head of the Red Sea Fjord, Elath is Israel's window to the Orient, as Haifa is her window to the Mediterranean and the West. Archaeologists, excavating mounds by the Gulf and the township, have identified King Solomon's haven of *Etzion Geber*—meaning the Spine of the Giant—"which is beside Elath", and is named from the rocky crags that come down to the sea. We may compare the Giants' Causeway in Ireland. It is within a few miles of the new harbour—at present just a jetty—which Israel is planning to build, and which may one day be a second Aden. The site is lovely and romantic. A belt of palms along the shore, all around bare black and red mountains, and the turquoise waters of the gulf between them. Three years ago Elath was waste and sand. Now it has barracks, an airfield, a fishery-school, an electric power-station, a radio-telegraph installation, a botanical garden, in which all the desert plants are gathered, a town hall and a municipality, and a stadium for entertainment, where some of the world's most famous musicians come to play. A road for motor-traffic from Beer-sheba to Elath, 140 miles long, is being constructed of kaolin, which is found in the Negev hills.

Near Elath, in what was part of a howling wilderness, Jewish pioneers have begun to cultivate the soil. Two



experimental farms have been planted in the Araba, where wells give adequate and sometimes abundant water-supply. One is a post of the Israel Army. The other, named 'Well of Light' (Bir Ora), is a training-centre for boys and girls of the secondary schools, who spend a few weeks of their pre-military service working the soil. They have turned what was a waste place into a smiling oasis. Water has been found also by boring in a Wadi 100 kilometres north of Elath, and that gives hope of a growing agricultural hinterland.

Elath is a place of rainbow colours morning and evening. The mountains around it, which are rich in copper and other minerals, are green, black, red and gold. And the fish in the deep waters of the Gulf of Akaba are striped in many colours like Joseph's coat.

Israel's port of Elath is opposite Jordan's port of Akaba, which is the one outlet of that Kingdom to the Sea. In the Revolt of the Desert during the First World War, Akaba was the supply base of Colonel T. E. Lawrence and the Emir Feisal of Arabia. In the Byzantine Empire and in the Middle Ages it was an important station on the land route which passed from Europe and from Egypt to the east across the desert. The Crusaders held Akaba as a strong-point and built a castle there. Today British destroyers occasionally are anchored before it, and English soldiers reinforce the garrison of the Arab Legion. They are there in virtue of the Treaty of Alliance between Great Britain and the Kingdom of Jordan.

A few miles along the shell-strewn seashore to the south you come to a post where a stone and an Arab sentry mark the frontier of the Hedjaz. That is the Holy Land of Western Arabia, which for centuries has been closed to the infidel, i.e. the non-Moslem. The name of the country means 'The Barrier'. Today the Hedjaz is part of the Kingdom of the son of Ibn Saud, who made himself the master of all Arabia except the little Kingdom of Yemen and the British Colony and Protectorate of Aden.

On the western side of the Gulf, opposite the Hedjaz, and a few miles south of Israel's Elath, you come to the Egyptian frontier guard stationed at an oasis. An Israel sentry watches above him on the cliff. A modern road runs from the Egyptian post, across the Egyptian section of Sinai, to Ismailia and the Suez Canal, linking Asia and Africa. An older road, rebuilt 100 years ago by the Egyptian conqueror, Ibrahim Pasha, who for

a time occupied Palestine, is in Israel's territory. For centuries the Negev has been a desert area to be crossed as rapidly as possible. Today it is being transformed to an area of agricultural settlement and industry and commerce, as it was 1700 years ago. And it is full of future. What has been done during the years of the hard conditions of armistice with Jordan is an earnest and a promise of bigger things to come.

*The Dead Sea and Jericho*

THE Dead Sea, as we have seen, is the most amazing natural feature of Palestine, and one of the most uncanny regions in the world. It takes its name because of the absence of any animal life in or around it, though the old story that birds flying over it fell dead was false. It is deserted by man and all living things, and is a pit of desolation. The apple that is found on its banks is dust and ashes inside. The places on its shores have been the scene of tragic dramas in the history of Israel, dramas of death and destruction. Sir George Adam-Smith, the author of the classical book, the *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, wrote fifty years ago: "The history of the Dead Sea opens with Sodom and Gomorrah, and may be said to close with the Massacre of Masada"—a hill above the western shore. There the Jews made their last desperate stand against the Romans after the destruction of their Temple at Jerusalem, and put an end to their own lives.

Since he wrote, however, a new chapter has been opened in the history of the Dead Sea region; and it is now a source of life through the inexhaustible wealth of fertilizing chemicals in its heavy waters. It is a 'fluid mine'. The Greeks called it The Sea of Asphalt. It has been calculated that it contains two thousand million tons of potash, and still more astronomical quantities of common salt. Before the end of the British Mandate plants for the exploitation of these mineral resources had been constructed at both the northern and the southern end of the Sea; and villages had been constructed—one of them at Sodom—for the workmen who were half Jews and half Arabs, and who lived together in amity.

A large export of potash and bromides went to England during the Second World War. The work was interrupted by the War of Independence between the Jews and the Arabs in 1948; and the main plant at the northern end of the Sea was completely destroyed by the Arab Army of Jordan. In the latest years the plant at the southern end, which is in Israel territory, has been operated again. It is situated by the traditional site of Sodom and Gomorrah, the wicked cities which were destroyed. A new



spectacular motor-road has been engineered to the plant from Beersheba. Descending to the Dead Sea down a sheer escarpment, it drops 1000 feet in two miles. In the abyss, in the midst of a fantastic landscape, which looks like mountains of the moon, an industrial area bursts out incongruously. You see spreading salt-pans and channels to conduct the waters from the shallows of the Dead Sea to the pans and the towering shafts and pipes of the factory. Sodom itself is marked by a steep cliff of crystal salt on the western shore. Here, traditionally, is the Pillar of Salt into which Lot's wife was turned when she looked back in the flight from the doomed cities. The Dead Sea is called by the Arabs 'The Sea of Lot'. Today Jews are mining the salt from the Cliff of Lot, cutting it in great slabs, and hurling it down to the beach, whence it is carried by lorry to Beersheba.

Attached to the plant of the potash enterprise at the north end of the Sea was a Jewish agricultural settlement, which was also destroyed in the War. A group of young men and women, most of whom had come to the country as children from Hitler's Germany, carried out an experiment on 200 acres of what was waste land impregnated with salt. They raised water from the River Jordan, which flowed in its deep ditch beneath their land, and washed the soil clean acre by acre, till they had extracted all the salt. Then they sowed part of it with vegetables and fruit, and part they turned into fishponds for breeding carp. In a few years they had established a prosperous collective farm.

The Dead Sea, then, already belies its name, and with the rest of Palestine shows abundant signs of revival. The Jews call it by its Bible name: 'The Sea of Salt'. In antiquity the region round the northern shore of the Sea was indeed one of the world's beauty spots. Here was Jericho, about seven miles to the north of the point where Jordan runs into the Sea. And Jericho was surrounded by orchards, plantations and forests. It was famous for its date-palms, its figs, and its balsam trees, from which was derived the balm of Gilead. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, who wrote the story of the Jewish Wars against the Romans, said of Jericho: "It is not easy to find any climate on earth to compare with it." Modern Jericho has remained a pleasant place, set in the midst of orange and banana orchards and date-palms, and in the Mandate time was a favourite winter resort.

A mile or so from the present large village is the mound covering the old city which Joshua and the Children of Israel besieged. It is set by a copious spring. The mound has been more thoroughly excavated in the last fifty years than any other site in the Holy Land. First a German expedition, and then, after the First World War, the English Professor Garstang dug through the strata, examined every piece of pottery, fragment of wall and grave, and traced one town after another. The latest expedition, starting in 1952, and led by the Englishwoman, Miss Kenyon, for the British School of Archaeology and the Palestine Exploration Fund, has found relics of ancient walls, burials and objects going back to 4000 B.C. It is claimed that Jericho was the oldest walled city in the world. And the town takes its Hebrew name from the moon, which was the first object of man's worship.

The history of civilization might begin with the words: "In the beginning was Jericho". At a period when all the settlements of antiquity were just passing from the stage of nomad life to the primitive village, Jericho was approaching the character of a town with a massive stone wall and houses clustered in a large area. At the same level relics were found of men's earliest artifice, portrait-heads modelled in plaster on a foundation of human scalps. And there were relics of a temple, perhaps man's earliest place of worship.

The oldest settlement belongs to the calcolithic—meaning the Copper and Stone Age. In that period man began to use metal to supplement the stone tools and implements which hitherto served for weapons, for scraping the ground, for catching fish, and for making himself beautiful. The next age of civilization, the Bronze Age, came when men mastered the art of turning copper to bronze, and metal superseded stone instruments. After that, about 1000 B.C., came the Iron Age.

Excavations in 1953 and 1954, by Miss Kathleen Kenyon, produced the thrilling discovery of burial chambers dated about 2000 B.C. They were in perfect condition on the hill-side around the Tell and under the Mount of Temptation. In some of them the scalps were piled around the chambers. Offerings of meat and drink for the gods, and jugs and plates were placed in each chamber, and for each skeleton a dagger. In some chambers there was a single burial; and the skeleton lay intact on a wooden bier. In others, family burials of ten or more bodies, with the like funeral furniture. In others again a



jumble of bones and offerings, as if an original occupation had been disturbed by later burials. By some amazing freak of climate, the wood of the biers and the wool of the woven cloth have been preserved. So were the very joints of meat for the offering. And remains of liquor were in the jars. There were three-legged stools and couches, such as are found in the Egyptian tombs, and baskets with articles for women's beauty. So unexpectedly we have life-like pictures of social life in the Jordan valley as well as burials of this remote age, such as had been given in Egypt by the Tombs of the Kings. They are not less exciting because they reveal the life of the common man, and not of Kings.

The finds of the archaeologists strengthen the case that Jericho was destroyed by the Children of Israel about 1400 B.C., and that the exodus from Egypt, therefore, took place some forty years before that date. On that showing the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Amenhotep III, and not Merenptah who reigned 200 years later. Some scholars had favoured the later date because of the stele of Merenptah, discovered in Egypt, which recorded "Israel is desolate" (see page 95). That boast, however, must probably refer to a later invasion of the Land of Canaan in the days of the Judges of Israel. During all that period Egypt held a kind of suzerain authority over the coastal plain.

Relics of the Egyptian occupation of Jericho before the fifteenth century, scarabs and beads, vases and pottery, are abundant. Professor Garstang distinguished between two Egyptian occupations, the earlier about 1750 B.C. and the later about 1500. He proved also that, after the sudden and total destruction of the City about 1400, the site was not occupied for some five centuries. The relics of the buildings at the time of the destruction show traces of a terrific fire. "Not a foot of the whole precincts can be found which does not show a thick deposit of charcoal, disintegrated bricks, and pockets of white ash."

The Old City under the mound was next to a copious spring named after Elisha. Streams run from the spring through the modern village, and everywhere is abundance of fresh running water. Ancient aqueducts are strewn in the gardens. In the sub-tropical plain of old the sugar-cane flourished, and ruins of sugar mills, also from the Middle Ages, are scattered in the fields.



Jericho, like so many other places in Palestine, is associated with King Herod. He obtained it as a gift from Queen Cleopatra, to whom it had been granted by Mark Antony; and he died there. Jesus visited Jericho on his way from Galilee to Jerusalem. And a monastery stands on the hill above the Jordan Valley, which is the traditional Mount of Temptation. The Arab Caliphs of Damascus, seven centuries later, had one of their winter palaces in the region. During the Second World War archaeologists of Palestine unearthed from the sands the relics of a palace five miles north of Jericho, which was splendidly decorated with mosaics—artistic masterpieces—depicting the hunting field, and was equipped with the luxury of swimming pools and fountains fed by an aqueduct from the Mount of Temptation. The builder was the Sultan Ibn Hashim, a son of the Sultan who built the lovely Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (see p. 76). The modern taunt—'Go to Jericho'—would certainly not have conveyed the same sense in ancient times. For Jericho was then a favourite pleasanse, like the French Riviera of our day. Today it is surrounded by camps of Arab refugees from Israel.

It is, too, a strange irony of language which has derived from Jericho, where you may still see man's oldest habitation, our 'jerry-built'. The Bible story of the tumbling of the houses of the city, when it was besieged by Joshua and the Children of Israel, is the origin of that phrase. Modern scholars have explained the sudden destruction as an earthquake. In the Jordan Valley earthquakes are common; and modern Jericho, which was jerry-built, was laid low by a 'quake in 1927.

Jericho is not the only place in this lower part of the Jordan Valley, the lowest spot on the globe, to give up in our days the record of man's earliest civilization. While the British Expedition was digging in the Mound of Jericho, a Jewish Archaeological Expedition was digging in other mounds between Jericho and the Dead Sea. They revealed the relics of a culture which also goes back 4000 years or more before the Christian era. The mounds were named Teleilat Ghassoul, and the culture is called Ghassouliau. On the walls of the caves were preserved primitive frescoes, in many colours, of animals and human figures. They found, too, pottery of a later age, with an elaborate geometrical pattern of the eight-pointed star, one of the first works of primitive art. Some scholars

identified the mounds with Sodom and Gomorrah, though long tradition has put those places at the southern end of the Dead Sea. It was clear anyhow that these primitive cities, with their Chaldean pottery of the age of the Hebrew patriarchs, had been destroyed suddenly by some calamity. They may well have had some connection with Abraham and Lot who came from Chaldea.

Proceeding along the shores of the Dead Sea on the western side, the first striking feature is a black cliff honeycombed with caves at a place called Feshker. The site has become suddenly famous in recent years. Here, in 1947, some Arab shepherds, tending their flocks, lighted accidentally on a sealed cave, and entering it found a hoard of scrolls that proved to be Hebrew manuscripts. Some were contained in big earthenware jars and sealed with a kind of gum. The scrolls were in leather bundles, which looked like the packages of dried apricots that the Turkish and Arab soldiers used to carry as their rations. The shepherds sold some to a Syrian bishop, others to Professor Sukenik of the Hebrew University. When the Jewish and other scholars unravelled their brittle leather, they found a complete manuscript of the Hebrew Book of Isaiah, a commentary on the Bible Book of Habakkuk, and hitherto unknown books in Hebrew, which are all believed to be older by many centuries than any manuscript of the Hebrew Bible heretofore known.

Some years ago, indeed, fragments of the Greek Book of Deuteronomy, a part of the Septuagint Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible made in the third century B.C., were found in a bundle of papyri in the Rylands Library of Manchester. And scholars have dated these Greek fragments as of the second century B.C. They were a parcel of the papyrus wrapping for mummies of human beings. It was part of the preparation of the mummy to have this stiffening of a kind of cardboard. And these Bible fragments were mixed with fragments of a book of Homer's *Iliad*. But the only Hebrew manuscript of any part of the Bible approaching that age was another tiny papyrus scrap found in Egypt, with the Ten Commandments and the Prayer of 'Shema', declaring the Unity of God.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, as they are commonly known, are all in Hebrew. One of the books is an apocalyptic poem which tells of the struggle between the forces of light and the forces



of darkness. It may reflect the struggle in the third and second century B.C., between the two Hellenistic kingdoms of the Ptolemies and the Seleucids. It is the first example of this apocalyptic literature to be discovered in the original Hebrew. The others have come down to us in Greek or in other translations. Another scroll was found to contain twelve Psalms of the post-Biblical age, each beginning with the phrase: "I praise Thee, O Lord." The script of both these scrolls is the Assyrian Hebrew, which has been used for 2000 years to write the scrolls of the Mosaic books in the Synagogue; but it has some characteristics which are precious for the critical study of the Hebrew Bible.

The scholars have not yet ended their controversy about the date of the finds. But it is generally accepted that they belong to the pre-Christian or to the earliest Christian centuries. It is surmised that they were stored in the caves during the time of the Jewish struggle with the Romans, by a colony of the monastic Jewish sect, the Essenes. Both the Jewish historian Josephus and the Roman historian Pliny, who at the end of the first century composed a *Natural History* and described the Dead Sea, record that the Essenes lived on the west side of the Sea. Pliny says that they were "away from the shores, out of reach of the baleful influence of the times, a solitary sect, and strange above all things in the world".

We know, too, that the pacifist Essenes stayed in these parts during the two death struggles of the Jewish nation; the wars against the Romans, 66-70, and the Revolt under Bar-Cochba, 132-5. It is likely that in the first or second century, when the Romans were exterminating the Jews in Palestine—much as Hitler exterminated the Jews in Europe 1800 years later—the survivors of the monastic sect hid away their Holy Books in the caves, so that they should not fall into pagan hands.

One of the manuscripts which has been discovered is a *Book of Discipline*, giving the rules for the conduct of life of the sect. A novel interpretation of the book of the Sectarials argues that the library belonged not to the Essenes, but to the primitive Christian community derived from them, the Ebionites. That sect derived their name from the Hebrew word for the poor; and like the Essenes, they shared all things in common. It is said that a text found in the caves containing Messianic quotations is in accord with the views of the



primitive Christian Church. Another piece of evidence to support this theory is that several phylacteries found in the caves contained parchments with the passage from Deuteronomy about the unity of God (*Shema*) and the Ten Commandments—which was a form used by the Hebrew Christians.

During the last years the discoveries of more ancient manuscripts and hundreds of Bible fragments in neighbouring caves of the wilderness—long inaccessible—at a valley, 'Qumran' by name, have piled up. Whole libraries have been revealed, as well as a large Jewish cemetery and ruins of a synagogue. There are letters from the Jewish leader of the Revolt himself, Bar-Cochba, to his Chief of Staff, and proclamations by him calling to the people to rise. The books and fragments throw a flood of light on the Bible and on the sects of the period when Christianity had its origin. It is an irony that the desolate Dead Sea region in our time has given this fuller knowledge of the past, and the Sea itself has become a source of fertility for the regeneration of the Holy Land.

One of the Essenes' retreats was the oasis of Engedi, south of Feshker, which suddenly bursts out in the desolate landscape. It is made fertile by a bounteous spring. The same Pliny describes its former fertility and its groves of palms, second only to Jerusalem; and in the Song of Solomon the vines of Engedi are an image of fruitfulness. The caves in the wilderness around Engedi were the scene of the drama of David and King Saul. There David caught unawares the King who with 3000 men was pursuing him; and spared his life (1 Sam. xxiv).

Today Engedi is a military post of Israel at the frontier between Israel and Jordan. For, while the northern part of the Dead Sea is altogether within Jordan, south of Engedi the Sea is bisected notionally between the two States. The western half and shore are Israel, and the eastern half and shore belong to Jordan. A group of pioneering youth have been added to Israel's military post at Engedi. They have started on the reclamation and cultivation of the soil, clearing away the rock, filling in the fissures, and terracing the slopes. They hope to restore the vineyards of which the Song of Songs speaks, and to replant the date-palms. The prophecy of Ezekiel is being realized (xlvii): From Engedi by the stream on its bank shall grow all kinds of trees for food.

The caves around Engedi have been explored in these last

years by Jewish amateur archaeologists, in the hope that they will yield documents of antiquity, such as the caves of the Wilderness of Judea in the Arab area have so abundantly and incredibly given. Broken Roman potsherds were strewn about, indicating that the caves had been inhabited; and there were remains of Roman camps similar to that of Masada (mentioned below). But hitherto no documents have been found. The inference is that Jewish rebels, fleeing from the ruthless campaign of extermination that followed the defeat of Bar-Cochba, took refuge in these caves, just as the Jews took refuge in the sewers of Warsaw during the Nazi war of extermination against Polish Jewry.

Ten miles south of Engedi is that desolate hill of Masada, which was the scene of the Jews' last stand in A.D. 70. Rising precipitously 1500 feet above the sea, it was a natural fortress occupied by the Maccabees, then two centuries later by Herod, and finally, for their last stand, by the Zealots who were the diehards of Jewish resistance. Its look is worthy of its history. The camp of the Roman commander, the line of circumvallation around the hill-top, the Roman road which ran from the sea to the camps; and the Roman ramp by which the Legionaries fought their way up the sheer mountain-side and brought up their siege-engines—all these have remained almost intact in the rainless, desert area. The scene recalls vividly the inflexible might of Rome and the desperate valour of the Jews. On the hill-top are the walls behind which they defended themselves, and the rocks hurled by the Roman catapults against them. When they could no longer resist, they put an end to their lives rather than that they or their wives or children should fall into the hands of the Romans.

South of Masada rises the hill, or rather cliff, 300 feet high, which is a solid mass of crystal salt, and is known as the 'mountain of Sodom' (see p. 135). Beyond the salt mountain the hills recede; and at the lower end of the Sea stretches seemingly endless wilderness. One small oasis breaks the desolation. Here, as at Engedi, springs of fresh water break out; and the plant for the extraction of the chemicals from the Dead Sea and a village for the workmen have been placed close to the spring. But today the spring is within the area of the Arab Kingdom of Jordan, just across the frontier, and the Jewish workers are cut off from it. In the Dark and Middle Ages a settlement of Jewish traders dwelt here, at a stage of

the caravan route. A few ruins from the Byzantine age remain. Here was Zoar, recorded in the Bible as the place to which Lot fled when Sodom and Gomorrah were overwhelmed. The name Zoar is often given to chapels of refuge in England to this day.

On the east side of the Dead Sea the mountains are higher than on the west; and rise steeply from the shore in rugged masses to a height of 3000 to 4000 feet. Starting again from the northern end, you come after a few miles to an oasis of palms and tropical vegetation which burst out from the bare cliff. They are nourished by pools of warm sulphurous water, bubbling up close to the shore. Here in the Roman time was a famous spa with the name Calirrhoe, meaning 'fair stream'. Above the springs towers the height of Machaerus, which was fortified by Herod and was the prison of John the Baptist. Here Salome danced and demanded John's head as reward. It was one of the fortresses of the Jewish nation in their fight for independence, first against the Hellenistic, and then against the Roman Empire. It looks out on the other fortress of Masada, on the western side of the Sea, and was also the scene of a death struggle of the people.

Some miles south of the hot springs, the river known in the Bible as the Arnon—now called Mojib—flows into the salt waters. It makes its way through a narrow gorge of red sandstone cliffs, descending in precipitate course from the mountains of Moab. By its banks, in the middle of the last century, an archaeologist discovered an inscribed stone that made history. It records in the Moabite language the exploits of a king of the ninth century B.C., who fought against Israel. The script is like Hebrew, and its interpretation was an important step in the science of reading the records of antiquity.

After the Arnon mouth a promontory breaks the line of the Dead Sea for ten miles. It is called Lisan, meaning tongue. And it is composed of white hillocks of marl which look like a snow-field. The northern and the southern points of the promontory have, curiously, English names. The northern cape is Point Costigan, named after an Irish sailor. In the early years of the nineteenth century he explored the then uncharted Sea, and died of the trials which he suffered from the sun and thirst. The southern cape is called Molyneux, after another sailor of the English Navy, who in 1847 explored the Sea in a canoe, and also lost his life. An American naval officer, Captain



Lynch, in the following year, 1848, did contrive to chart the Sea.

A steep road climbs from the base of the promontory, 4000 feet to the chief hill-town of Moab which is an impregnable crag. The Bible name was Kir Moab; but in the Middle Ages it was transformed by the Crusaders to Charac Moaba. Today the Arabs call it Kerak. Here was the capital of Balak, the Chieftain of Moab, who sent Balaam to curse the Children of Israel. The town is dominated by a fortress of the Crusaders built by King Fulco of Jerusalem in 1189. It was from Kerak that the famous Count Renaud de Chatillon raided the Saracen Kingdoms, transporting a flotilla by land to Akaba. The Arabs of Kerak and of the wild hill-country around it maintained their independence of the Turkish rulers till the eighties of the last century. Then the Sultan Abdul Hamid sent troops to subdue and massacre them. The building, at the end of the century, of the Moslem pilgrim railway, that passed through the now deserted land of Moab, strengthened the hold of the Central Government. The railway runs parallel with the Roman road, constructed by the Emperor Trajan 1800 years ago with the same purpose. Again today the making of roads is the means for linking the desolate area of the Dead Sea with the teeming life of Israel, and for making its chemical wealth the source of fertilizing the desert spaces. The lorries carry along the highway from the southern end of the Sea to Beersheba the life-giving minerals which may make the Wilderness again blossom as the rose.

Since this chapter was written, English, French and Israel archaeologists in their separate regions have unearthed fresh knowledge and manuscript treasure. The Bedu tribesmen, encouraged by their fortune, eagerly set about hunting for more in other caves. It became their chief occupation to chase manuscripts. The caves which honeycombed the region between Bethlehem, on the borders of the wilderness of Judaea, and the Dead Sea, proved a rich quarry. Manuscripts, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, of books of the Bible and Apocrypha and the Apocalypses, most in fragments, were gathered by the bushel. They await the interpretation of the scholars; but their content and their script, the jars and the linen wrappers in which some were found, and the ink, which has been tested by chemists, point to a date before the Christian era.

The diggers at Qumran uncovered, too, a Jewish monastery of the first century of the Christian era. Here was the source of the Library. It was complete with a writing-room, in which the ink-pots and the dried ink were still found. The date when this retreat was abandoned could be fixed by Roman and Jewish coins which were found on the site. It was in the first century.

In the last year an independent expedition of the Jewish Exploration Society has begun the scientific survey of the tragic fortress of Masada. It has found the Palace of Herod, with its halls of Corinthian columns, its painted frescoes, its vast granaries and cisterns, in the heart of the hill, as Josephus describes them in the last book of his Wars of the Jews. The future may have in store still more sensational finds in this wild region, which has become the Eldorado of archaeologists.

*The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*

THE country on the east side of the River Jordan was included after the First World War in the British Mandate for Palestine, but was administered separately and differently from the country of Western Palestine. The Jewish National Home was not to be established in that part of the mandated territory which was included in the area destined by war promises for Arab autonomy. The provisions of the Mandate, therefore, for facilitating the establishment of the Jewish National Home were declared by the British Mandatory, with the approval of the Council of the League of Nations, not to be applicable in Trans-Jordan. On the other hand, the provisions in the Mandate for encouraging self-government could be more thoroughly and more rapidly executed than in Western Palestine, since only one nation was involved. Even before the Mandate was confirmed in 1922 by the League of Nations, England recognized the Arab Emir Abdullah as an independent ruler of Trans-Jordan, subject to advice for the foreign affairs of the country, but for all internal matters enjoying autonomy.

The steps towards independence were taken rapidly. In 1923, the British Government agreed to adjust its Mandatory relations with the Emir by a Treaty, as it had already adjusted its relations in Iraq with his brother, King Feisal. The Treaty provided for a constitutional régime of the Emir, who undertook to place His Majesty's Government in a position to fulfil its international obligations as laid down in the Mandate. In April 1929, the Emir opened in Amman the first Parliament, which had been elected from the 300,000 inhabitants of the country. Throughout the years of the Arab revolt against the British Administration in Western Palestine (1936-39), and throughout the Second World War, the Emir Abdullah stood loyally by England and the Allies.

His status and title were changed at the end of World War II by a fresh Treaty. The British Government declared the Mandate at an end and recognized him as an independent sovereign. He then assumed the title of King of Trans-Jordan.



Subsequently, in 1949, after the Arab Legion—his Army—had occupied the Arab area in Western Palestine, which was not part of the State of Israel, and he had been acclaimed as ruler by the notables of those areas, he changed the title to King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Hashem is the name of the tribe—traditionally the tribe of Mohamed himself—from which Abdullah's family has sprung. The territory which was added to the Kingdom of Jordan included the old walled City of Jerusalem with the Moslem, the Christian and the Jewish Holy Places. When the proposal for an international Trusteeship régime in the whole city of Jerusalem and neighbouring villages was adopted by the Assembly of the United Nations, Abdullah was as strongly opposed to it as Israel. But he declared himself willing to accept a High Commissioner of the United Nations to be guardian of the Holy Places.

The Kingdom of Jordan has not yet been admitted as a member to the United Nations because of the Soviet veto. During his last years, King Abdullah pursued schemes for the union of his Kingdom with its greater neighbours, Iraq and Syria. His hope of ruling a Greater Syria, which would revive the glories of the Arab Caliphate, was frustrated by dynastic feuds in the Arab League. The flag of Jordan with its four colours, white, black, green and red, is a touching, almost a pathetic, reminder of that old glory. For the four colours represent three Moslem Arab dynasties, the Omayyads, the Abbassids and the Fatimites, who between the eighth and twelfth centuries ruled vast areas of the civilized world, and lastly, the Hashemite dynasty of the King's family, that claims unbroken descent from Mohamed's tribe.

King Abdullah was believed to favour a peace settlement with the State of Israel. On account of that attitude he was murdered in 1951, by minions of that intransigent, fanatical section which was determined to prevent negotiation for settlement. He was succeeded by his eldest son, Tallal, who, however, after a year, abdicated because of illness in favour of his son Hussein, then a schoolboy in England. Hussein was crowned King in May 1953, one month before the coronation of Queen Elizabeth.

The original territory of Trans-Jordan consisted mainly of the mountainous region between the rift of the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea on the west and the Syrian desert on the east. It comprised the lands which—passing from south to

north—are called in the Bible Edom, Moab, Ammon and Bashan. It is the country through which the Children of Israel marched after the exodus from Egypt and the years in the Wilderness, and before they entered the Promised Land. Mount Nebo, where Moses viewed the Land he was not to enter, is in Ammon. A part was included in the Biblical Kingdom of Israel and allotted to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, after Joshua's conquest of the country on the west side of Jordan. It was, also, the native land of Jephthah and Ruth and the prophets, Elijah and Elisha. But after Israel and Judah had been taken into captivity by the Assyrians and the Babylonians, the country was no longer inhabited by the Hebrew people. It was abandoned to nomad tribes, and its towns for some centuries passed out of history.

The conquest of the Persian Empire by the Greeks under Alexander the Great at the end of the fourth century B.C. made the territory again a centre of civilization. For this region was a favoured meeting-place of East and West. There Hellenism and Judaism were side by side. Its scenery bore a striking resemblance to that of Macedonia, from which the conquering army of Alexander had come. It attracted colonists from Europe. And the Hellenistic successors of Alexander planted on the site of the old villages of Moab and Ammon and Edom towns designed on the model of their beloved Greek city-states. Some of them bore the names of the towns in Macedonia, like Pella—the Canaanite Pihili—which was later to be one of the settlements of the earliest Christians. The Biblical names of others were changed for Greek. Amman, or Rabath Ammon of the Bible, became Philadelphia, meaning the place of brotherly love. Jerash became Gerasa.

The splendid ruins of temples, forums, arches and theatres in these places bear witness to their populousness and their prosperity in those days. They were important towns on the overland trade routes to the Orient which crossed the desert. In the Roman time a league of ten autonomous cities, the Decapolis, on both sides of the Jordan was founded for mutual aid. The language of their people was Greek, and their religion was a mingling of the Greek and the Roman mythology with the older Semitic cults.

The Kingdom of Judea, which was established by the Maccabees in the second century B.C., was extended, for a short time, across Jordan; and the people of Edom, the Idumeans,

were Judaeised, voluntarily or by force, by the Maccabean conqueror, Alexander Jannaeus. Herod, the King of Judea from 40-4 B.C., in the time of Julius Caesar and Augustus, was an Idumean. In that age an Arab people, derived from the desert, but living in the country across the Jordan, the Nabateans, made themselves a powerful border force. For a time they ruled from Damascus to the Red Sea, and they occupied also the Negev of Western Palestine, and cultivated intensively its barren steppes. They were the great caravan merchants of the Middle East, following the Phoenicians who had been the maritime merchants. They traded in the balm and spices from Southern Arabia and the merchandise of India. Their chief city was Petra, which means simply Rock—the origin of our Peter. Petra is identified with the biblical Selah, capital of Edom, whose name also means Rock. One of the Roman historians of the first century B.C. describes the happy political state of the Nabateans, of which he had heard from a native of Petra:

"It is exceedingly well-governed. Many Romans and other foreigners live there; and they are occasionally engaged in lawsuits. But none of the natives litigate with each other, and in every way they keep the peace."

In the second century the Roman Emperor Trajan subdued the Nabateans, and made their country the Roman province of Arabia Petraea. So long as the 'Roman Peace' was maintained, the towns of the border-marches of Trans-Jordan flourished. It was possible then to travel on the straight Roman roads for 100 miles or more in the day. When the Empire became Christian, the pagan temples were transformed into churches, the Roman baths into monasteries; and the country continued to flourish. Petra was the seat of a Greek bishop; and the Greek Orthodox Bishop of the Holy City of Bethlehem took, and still takes, his title from Philadelphia (Amman). The Roman frontier road, the *Limes*, which was fortified, continued to guard the country against raiding tribes from the Desert.

The Arab conquest in the seventh century gave to the outposts of Roman civilization on the edge of the Syrian and Sinai deserts a new importance. The Arab rulers were of the same stock as the Nomads and the peasant population of the



villages, and they kept their affection for places bordering on the desert. They built for themselves palaces in them and hunting lodges. The Christian Crusaders, also, who came to conquer the land for Christendom, had an affection for the strong-points on the rocky hills that guarded the marches. They knew the country as *Oultre-Mer*, that is, across-the-Dead-Sea. We may compare their castles with those built by the Norman barons on the borders of Wales.

After the Crusaders were driven out of the Holy Land in the thirteenth century, however, and the dominion passed from the Arabs to peoples from Central Asia, Seljuk and then Ottoman Turks converted to Islam, who were rougher and ruder, a long eclipse fell on the country. Then came the barbarian hordes from Central Asia, the Tartars and the Mongols. They destroyed the villages, cut down the trees, neglected the wells and the irrigation channels. The desert sands drifted over the cultivation, and "the thin strip of herbage which divides the desert from the sown" was overwhelmed. The country, once so prosperous, afforded a poor pasture for a few thousand Arabs, of the Bedu nomad tribes. And so it remained for 500 years.

The one link with its splendid past was the road—the old Roman frontier highway—that ran from Damascus southwards, by the edge of the desert to the Arabian peninsula. That remained the highway for Moslem pilgrims travelling on foot from Syria and Palestine to Mecca and Medina. Once a year the army of the faithful set out, attended by a motley array of shopkeepers, soldiers and thieves, and led by an Emir of the pilgrimage. The road was marked at distances of twenty miles by a castle guarding a cistern of water. To the station the pilgrim army came for its halts, and for the burial of those who had died on the last stage. Along its course piles of stones were heaped up by weary pilgrims hurling them against Satan.

A few miles east of the Pilgrim Way, and east of one of the stations, Ziza, which in the Second World War was an aerodrome, you come suddenly on a relic of the former splendour. It is a skeleton of a Persian Palace of Meshatta, ascribed to King Chosroes II, the monarch who, at the beginning of the seventh century, shortly before the Arab conquest, overran the Holy Land. Most of the lovely plaster-carving of the façade was carried off bodily by a German scientific expedition

before the First World War to grace a Museum in Berlin. The skeleton has just enough of ornamentation in the few corners to give an idea of the glory that has gone.

It was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that the country across Jordan began to recover from its long neglect, and then very slowly. The tyrannical Sultan of Turkey, Abdul Hamid, who reigned from 1878 to 1908, while the Turkish Empire was disintegrating, sought to strengthen his authority in the remote provinces by planting there groups of Circassians. They were Moslem fugitives from Turkestan, after its annexation by Russia. Then, with German technical help, he built for strategic purposes, proved vain in 1916, an iron railroad by the side of the stony track of the pilgrims. Gaunt station buildings were erected by each reservoir of the Pilgrim Way. The line was begun in 1900, and reached Amman in 1902. Gradually some of the wasted land was reclaimed, and some of the ruined villages were restored to human habitation. Among them were Amman and Es-Salt, between Jericho and Amman. One of the biblical sites to be resettled was Madeba in Moab. It is mentioned in the Book of Isaiah (xv, 2), and was the seat of a Christian Bishop in the Byzantine Empire. Two thousand Christians, driven from another town in Moab, while building new homes in the ruins, uncovered an antique mosaic beneath the floor of a ruined basilica of the sixth century. The mosaic showed a map of Palestine and Egypt and of Jerusalem as they were in the days of Justinian. That is a most precious guide to the knowledge of the topography and buildings of the Holy City as it was before the Arab conquest.

Slowly cultivation was restored, and tribes were settled on the soil. Yet, when the Emir Abdullah was recognized in 1920 by the British Government as ruler of a territory larger in area than Palestine west of the Jordan, the total number of its inhabitants did not exceed one-quarter million. And nearly half of them were nomad Arabs. At that time three-quarters of a million were living in Western Palestine, the other section of the territory under the British Mandate.

During the thirty years of Abdullah's rule, the population, like that in Western Palestine, was trebled. It is now estimated at 1,000,000. But it has grown most spectacularly during the last five years, since the establishment of the State of Israel. In that short period it has been doubled. A large part of the increase is due to the inclusion in the Kingdom of the wedge of

hilly territory in Western Palestine, the Biblical plateau of Judaea and Samaria, which was allotted to the Arabs in the decision of the United Nations about partition of Palestine. The settled inhabitants of the added region numbered 300,000, including those in the Old City of Jerusalem. The other chief town added to Trans-Jordan was the ancient Shekhem which the Arabs have called Nablus (see p. 115).

Two other towns in the Samaritan Plateau are Jenin, which commands the eastern section of the Vale of Esdraelon, and Tul-Karm, which commands the Coastal Plain at the mouth of the valley that leads down from Nablus. In the Judean Plateau two cities famous in the Hebrew Bible, Bethlehem, the birthplace of David, and Hebron his first capital and the burial place of the Patriarchs, are part of Jordan.

In addition to the settled and permanent inhabitants, Trans-Jordan has been a place of refuge for as many refugees from the territory of Israel who fled in the course of the War. Between 400,000 and 500,000 are living there, many of them in camps or in caves. So far only a small portion have been willing to be settled on the land.

Thirty years ago the town of Amman, now the capital of a Kingdom, was simply one long street in the cleft of a valley through which runs a stream. Above the valley and the stream was a vast Hellenistic amphitheatre with seats rising in tiers, and sculpted from the rock, for 7000 persons, a reminder of the former size and greatness of the place. An old Roman bridge still spans the stream. The ruins of a Sassanian or Persian Citadel crown the hill above the amphitheatre. The citadel recalls the period before the Arab conquest of the Middle East, when the Persians constantly invaded and occupied the Eastern Marches of the Byzantine Roman Empire. A modern royal palace of the King of Jordan, built with a somewhat incongruous Swiss architecture, rises by the side of the Persian ruins. Below, outside the spreading town, are the British Embassy and the Legations of the other foreign states. Mosques, hospitals and schools have sprung up in the town, and a Museum of Antiquities is being rapidly enriched with the fruits of excavation in a land as rich in history as Western Palestine.

The most impressive Graeco-Roman antiquities in Trans-Jordan, indeed in all Palestine, are found not at Amman, but at Jerash, thirty miles to the south-west. Jerash, the Gerasa



of the Greeks and Romans, for 700 years was the capital city of the land of Gilead. Only for a short time was it included in the Jewish Kingdom of the Maccabees. Alexander Jannaeus captured it, but fifty years later the Roman Pompey, who broke up the short-lived Jewish Empire, made it again an independent Greek City State. It was one of the League of ten cities that in a way anticipated the League of Arab States of today. A Jewish community remained in the city, and a spirit of tolerance distinguished the citizens of Gerasa. Synagogues and churches were built side by side with pagan temples; and their ruins, excavated in recent years, jostle each other. They form an epitome of the post-biblical civilization in the Bible land; a perfect specimen of a Roman town.

The Circassians, who were placed at Jerash by the Turks, made havoc of the columns and the capitals that strewn the plain. But the British School of Archaeology, which in the days of the Mandate carried out a thorough exploration, stayed the destruction of the ruins. Of the great Colonnade which had 500 columns, seventy are standing.

The Holy Way (Via Sacra) flanked by temples and forums of the second century A.D., and Byzantine churches decorated with mosaics, that throw a flood of light on ancient geography and ancient art, have been impressively restored to view. Excavation has disclosed thirteen Byzantine sanctuaries built between the third and sixth centuries. In one church the mosaics give a vivid picture of the cities of Egypt in the form of a pictorial map. Beneath the level of another church the excavator uncovered fragments of a synagogue which is dated of the fourth or fifth century.

The mosaic of the Jerash Synagogue depicts a scene of the Flood with the figures of Shem and Japhet and a dove carrying a twig. Animals moving into the ark form the frieze around these objects. There is an incomplete inscription in Greek, of which the end is clear: "Amen, Selah, Peace to the Synagogue." On a panel is another inscription in Hebrew characters to the honour of the benefactors of the synagogue: "Phineas, son of Baruch, Jose, son of Samuel, and Judas, son of Hezekiah." So late then as the fifth century, the Jews in the Diaspora of the Roman Empire wrote Hebrew and Greek, and were bilingual.

The suppression of the synagogue by the church took place in the reign of Justinian (c. 530), the codifier of the Roman

law and also the author of a resolute anti-Jewish policy. Christianity was already a jealous church. But it, too, had not much longer rule in the land. The Arabs, 100 years later, destroyed the churches and basilicas, or converted them into mosques. Jerash remained an important place under the Omayyad caliphs, whose capital was at Damascus; but an earthquake in the eighth century and the shifting of the caliphate to Bagdad ended its career, and it sank away into nothingness.

Some twenty miles north of Jerash is another relic of past civilization, the Saracen castle of Ajlun. You come to it through wooded rolling country, with the sight of Hermon in its snows, suspended as it were between heaven and earth, along the horizon. Ajlun is in the south of the land of Bashan in which the giant 'sons of Anak' lived; but is not a Biblical site. The castle rises from the rocky cliff above the Jordan Valley, and overlooks the whole of Palestine from Dan to Beersheba. Saladin, whose seal is set in the walls, built the castle to hold the Christian barons in check. It was the retort to the Latin castle, Belvoir, or Kaukab el Hawa (Star of the Air), which is perched on the escarpment of the opposite side of the Jordan Valley between Tiberias and Baisan. Though shaken by the earthquakes of 1837 and 1927, which laid low many places, the castle still has a look of impregnability. Eastwards from Ajlun the region is full of early Christian ruins. Conspicuous among them is the Cathedral of Bosra, built of the volcanic basalt that is the formation of the land throughout the marches of the Hauran.

The northern boundary of the Kingdom of Jordan runs by the headlong course of the Yarmuk river which, rising in the Plateau of the Hauran, falls in rapids through a deep gorge on its way to the Jordan. At the gorge three States, formerly three mandated territories, meet—Syria in the north, Jordan in the south, Israel in the west. The gorge was the scene of one of the decisive battles of the world. Yarmuk is the Arabic corruption of the Greek name Hieromax; and it was by the banks of that stream that the Moslems, in the year A.D. 636, then in the first flush of their conquests, laid low the might of the Byzantine Empire, and obtained the mastery of Syria and Asia Minor. In the following years they took Jerusalem, Caesarea, Damascus and Antioch, established the Crescent in the centres of Eastern civilization, proved their ascendancy

over Christendom in its original home, and launched the great Arab emigration which made an attempt at universal empire.

The place of meeting of the three States is named El Hammeh, meaning the hot springs. Here a boiling sulphur spring bursts out of the ground. It was known in the Talmud of the Jews as Hamatha—which is the same Semitic root—and by the spring the remains of an ancient synagogue have been excavated. The hot baths of Tiberias some ten miles away are still famous, as they were in Roman times. The baths at El Hammeh were even more frequented in the Roman age, and relics of the Roman occupation are scattered about the scene. Hard by the railway station you see the ruined walls and the ruined gates of a Roman theatre, and a little way up the hill, on the other side of the Yarmuk, are larger ruins of two theatres, a temple and a forum. They lie by a rough Arab village. Now known as Um-Keis, it is identified by scholars with the Graeco-Roman Gadara, a city famous for nearly 1000 years as a centre of culture. The ruins are a testimony to the brilliance of that culture.

The baths of Gadara were, during the period of the Roman Empire, second only in fame to those of Baiae in the Bay of Naples; and the town which grew around them was a centre of intellectual life. In the first century of the Christian era, Gadara produced a poet Meleager, who was one of the principal composers of the Greek Anthology. He called the city "a little Athens among the Assyrians". Hellenism and Hebraism rubbed shoulders in these Hellenized towns.

At the other end of the Kingdom of Jordan Petra is the most romantic of all the cities of antiquity of the Bible land, and the most fascinating. It is unique in its combination of scenic beauty and scenic wonder with historic monuments of 3000 years ago. The capital city of the Nabateans is cut out of the rock of the sandstone mountains:

A rose-red city half as old as time,

as an English poet described it a hundred years ago. The less-known lines that precede are:

It seems no work of man's creative hand,  
By labour wrought or wavering fancy planned;  
But from the rock, as if by magic, grown,  
Eternal, silent, beautiful, alone.



The lure of Petra lies in part in its isolation. You gaze at the varied display of a Hellenistic city, theatres, forums, temples and, above all, ornate tombs cut mysteriously in the heart of the rocky mountains; and you see scarce an inhabitant, save a few rude shepherds who use the tombs as steadings for their sheep.

The city is built in the deep narrow gorge which opens out into rocky defiles. The temples, theatres and sepulchres are carved out of the solid dark red stone of the cliffs, and the sunlight and shadows piercing through the narrow gorge create ethereal colours. High above the gorge, 700 feet up and 3700 feet above sea-level, is a place of much older worship. It is a High Place of the Horites or Canaanites, who must have dwelt in the caves 3000 years ago. It preserves with an extraordinary vividness the traces of the old cults; the sunken court, the sacrificial altar and two obelisks cut out of the solid rock intact. They are the objects of the earliest Semitic worship.

The canyon, in which the ruined city is built or sculptured, is called by the Arabs Wadi Moussa, the River of Moses. Here is the traditional place where Moses struck the rock to make the water flow for the murmuring Children of Israel. And one of the mountains above it is named after Aaron, the High Priest, and is traditionally his burial-place. The whole region is associated with Moses and the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Some scholars have placed in this wild region the Wilderness of Kadesh Barnea, where the Children of Israel passed forty years, though the spring of Kadesh has usually been located in the Sinai peninsula. More certainly this is the country of Edom, which means Red: and took its name from the red stone of the canyons.

In the two centuries before the Christian era and the first century of that era the Nabatean Arabs spread their settlements on both sides of the Araba, and in their mountain fastnesses maintained their independence of the Romans till the Emperor Trajan subdued them. Petra was almost impregnable, and its rulers were the princes of the caravans which passed from north to south and from east to west. Their emporium, hidden away in their inaccessible valley, was a main trading centre of the world. But in the third century it gave place to Palmyra, further to the east in the Syrian desert, and to Bosra in the northern plateau, which the Romans made the chief town of their province.

Petra was the seat of a Christian bishop in the Byzantine Empire. It was a fortress of the Franks in the era of the Crusades, and their castle is on the site of the Arab citadel. But after the expulsion of the Crusaders it disappeared from knowledge till the beginning of the nineteenth century (1812). Then a famous Swiss traveller, Burckhardt, disguised as a Moslem Arab, discovered it; and a few years later came an English traveller, Banks, friend of Byron. Today it is a 'sarcophagus of an ancient civilization', dear to the tourist and the archaeologist.

From Petra, the rose-red city, to Akaba and the gulf of the Red Sea, the road lies through the stark arid country of Midian, to which Moses fled from Egypt, when he had killed the oppressor of his brethren. Here he saw the wonder of the burning bush. The land of Midian is a weird and fantastic array of sandstone and limestone hills. In most of it there is no sign of habitation, not even the black-hair tents of the Bedu Arabs. The one inhabited place on the way to the sea is Maan. It is still, as it has been for 4000 years, a fenced city, the strong place and the market-town of this inhospitable land. The Turks had a garrison here; and today it is occupied by a detachment of the Arab Legion, Jordan's military force. It rises with its grey fortress walls from the waste of black flint, the last outpost of civilization before the desert which stretches to the east, to Bagdad, and to the south, to the Holy Cities of Islam. From Maan the road comes down to the sea at Akaba, on the east side of the Gulf, which is the only port of the Kingdom of Jordan.

*Syria and the Lebanon*

PALESTINE and Syria have been intimately bound together throughout the ages. Until the British conquest and occupation by Allenby's Army in 1918, most of Palestine was administratively a part of two Turkish provinces or vilayets, Syria and Beirut—the latter being the capital and principal port of the territory we know as the Lebanon. Palestine was called, indeed, by the Arabs, Southern Syria. At the end of the First World War the principal Allied Powers separated Palestine from Syria. They gave the Mandate for Palestine, including Trans-Jordan, to Great Britain, and the Mandate for Syria, including the Lebanon, to France. Syria and the Lebanon became independent States before Israel and Jordan.

Syria, as we have noted, takes its name from Tyre (Hebrew *Sur*), which was the most famous Phoenician harbour. The merchants of Tyre, the Bible tells, were princes, and Tyre was "the merchant of peoples unto many isles". The maritime province was regarded by the Greeks and Romans as the whole country. The Jews called the country *Aram*. From that name comes the language *Aramaic*, spoken by all the peoples of this region in the time of Christ. *Aramaic* is the same as *Syriac*, which has remained the language of scripture of the Assyrian Church. The name *Lebanon* comes from the Hebrew word meaning white. It was given to the country because of its snow-mountains, Hermon and the other peaks of the Lebanon range. And the Arabs to this day call the country 'the Mountain'. The Lebanon has, however, like Palestine, a fertile coastal plain; and the inhabitants of that plain and coast have had a great part in moulding our civilization.

Three thousand years before the Christian era, the plain was occupied by the Phoenician people who were Semites, of the same family as the Canaanites and the Hebrews, and coming from the desert. They became the chief mariners and the chief merchants of the world of antiquity, the predecessors by 4000 years of the English in their voyages over the oceans. They were, too, the predecessors of the Jews as the carriers of culture



and religion from the East to the West. The Phoenician coast, that runs 150 miles to the north of the coastal plain of Palestine, is strewn with the ruins of the passage of their nation and other nations. In their harbours, 2000 years before the Christian era, ships were gathered from Egypt and North Africa, from Cyprus and the Greek islands; and in their towns the caravan routes met from Egypt, Asia Minor and Mesopotamia.

A vivid light was thrown on this ancient international civilization some twenty-five years ago by the unearthing of a buried Canaanite-Phoenician town, Ugarit, at the Bay of Ras Shamra. The site is a few miles north of Latakia—hitherto known best for its tobacco. Latakia is on the coast, fifty miles east of the Island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean; and Ugarit was a meeting-place of the Aegean and the Oriental peoples. The story of the finding is romantic. A peasant struck the point of his ploughshare against the edge of a stone slab. When the slab was removed, he found steps leading to the door of a beehive-shaped tomb. The French archaeologists got to work, and dug up a larger mound. They discovered a city by the sea dated between 2000 and 1500 B.C. The city was full of works of art and handicraft from many countries, statues of the Egyptian Pharaohs, vases from Cyprus and Crete, bronze axes and picks, and a whole museum of pottery. But the most striking discovery was of a library of the fifteenth century B.C., which was filled with brick tablets—the old substitute for paper and parchment—inscribed in cuneiform characters.

Six languages have been distinguished in these records. The Babylonian, which was the diplomatic speech of antiquity, like the French of modern Europe; Sumerian, that comes from Mesopotamia, and was the language of religion, as Latin was in the Middle Ages; Egyptian and Hittite, written in picture script or hieroglyphs; Phoenician-Hebrew, written in cuneiform, and with an alphabet which may be the prototype of all the Semite alphabets; and another tongue, which has hitherto not been deciphered. The life of the Eastern Mediterranean sea-port was international, then as now. Among the literary treasure a religious epic poem contains moral precepts similar to those in the Law of Moses, and expounds the problems of the life and death of man. The later excavations since World War II have given us an international archive with hundreds of documents, political, legal and commercial, of

the Hittite Empire of Anatolia to which Ugarit belonged. They are dated of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries B.C.

The discovery of this ancient library gives us much fuller knowledge of the origin of alphabetic writing. It had been known that the Phoenicians were the authors of that most revolutionary invention in man's intellectual life, the alphabet. But now we know much more about the alphabet, and how it replaced the signs and pictures of the Babylonian and Egyptian writing. The word alphabet itself comes from the Phoenician language through the Greek. It represents the names of the first two letters: Aleph (Alpha), which in Phoenician and Hebrew means an ox, and Bet, which in those languages means a house. The letters, the origin of our A and B, were developed from small stylized pictures of ox and house. The initial consonants were taken as the phonetic value of those pictures. And the Greeks took their Semitic names Alpha and Beta to describe the system, and derived their own letters from the Phoenician-Hebrew. It was probably their commercial activity which led the Phoenicians to this invention. They needed a ready way of recording their accounts of the merchandise which they bought and sold. It was, too, their skill in sailing their ships to all parts of the Mediterranean, and beyond it to the Atlantic Ocean and the shores of Cornwall—from which they brought the tin to mix with their copper and manufacture bronze—that carried this invention to other peoples. Thus from the Phoenicians the Greeks and the Romans later developed both their letters and their scripts.

One of the earliest Phoenician inscriptions, which had been discovered before the find of Ras Shamra, was on the tomb of a king of the fourteenth or thirteenth century B.C., at another harbour of Syria, Byblos. There also excavations had shown that Egyptians and Phoenicians used the place together for centuries from 3000 B.C. The place Byblos gives us the word for the Bible. It was celebrated as the market for papyrus, from which the paper was made. The Phoenicians must have been great users of papyrus. The Greeks called the paper after the name of the place; and then the book which was made from the paper was called Byblion, i.e. Bible.

The Phoenicians carried in their ships man's first metal, the copper from Cyprus—which gave the name of the island—the timber from the mountains and forests of the Lebanon—the famous Cedars, and the pottery which their craftsmen

made, to all parts of the then civilized world. Their most famous cities, of which we read in the books of the Bible and also in the poems of Homer, were Sidon and Tyre. They are close to the present territory of Israel. The city itself that once held the empire over the Mediterranean has been destroyed time and again. But there is "a village which men still call Tyre", and the rock-bound harbour is still full of fishing-craft. Tyre has risen, phoenix-like, several times from its ruins. In the era of the Byzantine Christian Empire it was a stronghold of the Church; and in the era of the Crusades it was a place of much commerce with Europe. After the Arab conquest of Syria and Palestine it was an important centre of Jewish population. And when Jerusalem fell into the hands of the Seljuk Turks (1075), the chief Rabbinical Academy was transferred there.

The power of the Phoenicians on the Syrian coast was destroyed by Alexander the Great (330 B.C.), when he conquered and razed to the ground, for a time, the cities of Sidon and Tyre. Thereafter they disappeared as a separate people in Syria and Palestine, and were merged with their Semitic kin, the Jews. The power of their colonies in the Mediterranean, of which the most famous was Carthage in North Africa, (close to the present Tunis)—Winston Churchill made a famous speech there in World War II—was destroyed 150 years later by the Romans.

The Romans, in the first century of the Christian era, rebuilt one of the Phoenician harbours on the Syrian coast and named it Berytus. That is the modern Beirut, today the principal port of Syria and the Lebanon. In the Roman Empire it was not only a great port but a famous University city, and had a celebrated school of law. And today it is again a University city, with two Colleges, one established by Jesuits from France, the other by Protestants of the United States. In the nineteenth century, when the Western Powers began to spread their culture over the Middle East, Christian missionaries carried schools and institutes of higher education to Palestine and to Syria and the Lebanon. Beirut was a favoured place because the majority of the population of the Lebanon province—part, as it was then, of the Turkish vilayet of Beirut—was Christian. They belonged to many sects, and they were the relics of the different Christian Churches which had broken away from the single Church in



the Dark and the Middle Ages. There were Maronites, Greek Catholics and Greek Orthodox as well as Roman Catholics and Protestants. For when the Roman Catholic Church in Europe ruthlessly stamped out any heresy, the Moslems in the Middle East were tolerant, and let their Christian subjects have religious freedom.

In the nineteenth century, however, the bitter strife broke out in the Lebanon mountains between the Christians, particularly the Maronites, and a Moslem heretical sect of hardy mountaineers, the Druzes. Like several of the Christian groups, the Druzes were heretics, who, in their religious doctrine, combined elements of Christianity, Islam and older pagan cults. But they, too, were allowed religious freedom. When they attacked the Christians in the Lebanon, the French, being the traditional protectors of the Latin Church, came to the aid of the Maronites and sent an expedition to Syria. The Druzes were driven out of the Lebanon mountains, and transferred their home further east to mountain fastnesses on the edge of the Syrian desert. A part of their community of 120,000 moved to the hills of Galilee and Carmel in Palestine, and in the War of Independence, 1948, threw in their lot with the Jews.

The French secured for the Christian population of Lebanon, and also for its Moslem minority, a better system of government than then obtained in the rest of the Turkish Empire. And thereafter the French, through members of their religious Orders, began to spread their language and their culture over the whole region. In this way Beirut became an important centre of Arab and Western culture. The American Protestants also took a hand in spreading English schools, besides their English-speaking University College. Their activity led to a large migration of the Lebanese to the New World. But most returned to the motherland when they had made their little pile.

Beirut was the chief city of the French Mandatory Government for Syria and the Lebanon, from 1920 till 1945. Today it is the capital of the Lebanon Republic, which is a separate State from Syria and a member of the United Nations. Its history and its geographical advantages have fitted it to be a centre of the work of the United Nations in the Middle East. A few years ago the Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (U.N.E.S.C.O.) held there a Conference with representatives of all countries of the world; and the United Nations have established there the centre of administration

for the relief and resettlement of the Arab refugees from Western Palestine.

Beirut then is again an international city, as it must have been in the era of the Phoenicians and of the Roman Empire. Another former Phoenician city on the coast has regained an international character, not so much as a centre of culture, but as the outlet of one of the world's great trading enterprises. The pipe-line brings the oil from the petroleum fields of the Middle East to Tripoli, which is about fifty miles north of Beirut, and is the port for the oil from the Mosul field. Tripoli, the Greek name for triple city, was originally a Federal centre of colonies from the three principal Phoenician towns, Tyre, Sidon and Arvad. The last was an island-mart, close to the mainland, which is mentioned by the prophet Ezekiel. In antiquity it had something like the place of Venice in the Middle Ages. Tripoli, like Tyre, was still an important place in the Byzantine Empire and the Crusader Kingdom. In the seventeenth century, when the Levant Trading Company of England established its centre at Aleppo, it was one of the places specifically mentioned as within the British consular jurisdiction. There must have been an English factory in the port. Shakespeare in the *Merchant of Venice* speaks of a ship bound to Venice from Tripoli, and Hakluyt, the Elizabethan chronicler of the Voyages, tells of the "tall ships of London" in Tripoli and in Beirut.

Between Beirut and Tripoli on the coast a romantic spot records in vivid, imperishable pictures the march of civilization in this historic land. It is a gorge of the Dog River—so-called because at its mouth is a sculpture of the Egyptian dog-headed god. The gorge is bounded by walls of hard rock. Here the conquerors passing along the road have recorded their passage and their victories. Here, as it has been said, "where a few men could forbid the world to pass", they have left their visitors' book. There are more than thirty tablets—Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions in hieroglyphic and cuniform script; the seal of Rameses of Egypt who led his armies against the Hittites; the signet of the Assyrian Sennacherib, who passed in the reverse direction to overrun Palestine. Here the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius (c. A.D. 180) built a new road and recorded his work. Here Crusaders and Saracens inscribed their names and exploits. Here, coming to more modern times, the French expedition of 1860, obliterating one of the inscriptions

of Rameses, proclaimed in its place their own achievements. Then, during the First World War, the Turks recorded their removal of the French record, though the French later restored it. Here the Indian division of General Allenby's Army recorded in 1918 its passage on its way to occupy the towns of Syria. Here the first French Governor of Mandated Syria described the rebuilding of the road and the bridge. And here, finally, the British Army, in the Second World War, made their mark when they had driven out the Nazi agents and the Vichy-French commanders from Syria.

Syria, in the strictest sense of the name, is the country between the mountains of the Lebanon and the Syrian desert. It consists of a high plateau and the valleys of two great rivers, the Orontes, which flows into the Mediterranean, and the Euphrates in its upper courses, before it descends to the plain of Iraq and the Persian Gulf. It includes five famous cities. They are still places of large population, and of trade and the mingling of peoples: Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and Antioch. (They are given in the order from south to north.) Of the five Damascus is the oldest, and it has been a great town from the dawn of history. It is recorded in the early Egyptian monuments and in the earliest chronicles of the Hebrew people. The Patriarch Abraham pursued the bands of the Canaanite King "to the left hand of Damascus". It was marked out for its destiny as the chief city of Syria by the wealth of waters, which burst out on the plain and create what seems to the Arabs of the desert a Garden of God.

Tradition tells that Mohamed gazing on the city from a hill above it, after days of trekking with camels through the desert from Arabia, turned away saying: "Only one paradise is allowed to man. I will not take mine in this world."

Its greatest days were in the first three centuries of the Moslem Empire of the East (A.D. 630-900), when the Omayyad Caliphs had here their capital. They beautified what was already a beautiful Roman and Byzantine city with lovely mosques and bazaars, baths and gardens. The Great Mosque of Damascus was one of the wonders of the world. It was a converted Christian church or basilica. One of its walls was of crystal glass with apertures according to the days of the year; and the hours were told by a dial as the sun's rays entered.

It was at Damascus that Paul, passing from his city of Tarsus in the north—near the modern Turkish port of Mersina



—to Jerusalem, had the vision which converted him. When he started to preach the novel Christian doctrine to the Jews in the town, they rose against him; and he escaped in a basket let down from the city wall, from a house in the Street called Straight. That street survives, and is still straight. The incident of Paul was recalled when, in 1925, Lord Balfour, visiting the city after his journey through Palestine, had to be smuggled away from his hotel to escape an excited Arab mob demonstrating against one whom they regarded with hostility as the creator of Zionism.

Damascus was a turbulent centre of Arab national feeling during the twenty-five years of the French Mandatory Administration. Several times its people broke out in revolt. When the French Mandate came to an end in 1945, and Syria and the Lebanon were separated as independent States, Damascus was the natural capital of Syria. It has remained a pivot of unrest, and changes of Government have been frequent. Its bazaars are the whispering galleries of the Middle East. The outstanding political character of the Arab States, since they attained independence, has been the restored pride of Islam, and the attempt to throw off not only foreign control but foreign influences. The pendulum has swung back from Western to Eastern direction.

Homs, the second town of Syria, lying fifty miles north of Damascus, was also famous in the Roman Empire. It was then named Emesa, and was celebrated for its great Temple to the Sun-god, who was worshipped all over Syria. A priest of the Temple, Elagabalus, becoming the Roman Emperor in the third century, tried, but failed, to make that worship an Imperial religion. His name, meaning God of the Mountain, marked that attempt. But Christianity was already spreading rapidly among the pagan people.

From Homs an ancient and a modern highway leads to the eastern desert, by way of Palmyra, the most celebrated of all the desert towns of the Roman Empire. Palmyra is identified with Tadmor in the Wilderness which King Solomon founded. The Temple to the Sun-god at Palmyra was a stupendous building; and a modern Arab village nestles in one corner of its ruins. Here was the capital of the Queen Zenobia of an Arab royal house, who, in the third century, challenged the might of the Roman Empire. Beneath the huge columns of the Temple the ruins stretch for miles to the horizon of the

sandy hills; other temples, forums, arches and baths. The scene is like Petra, but still more desolate. And it is approached, as is Petra, by a narrow gorge lined with tombs. It was at Palmyra that in the early years of the nineteenth century the proud and adventurous Englishwoman, Lady Hester Stanhope, was acclaimed as the successor of Zenobia, Queen of the Arabs.

North of Homs is the third town, Hama. It rises on the site of the Hamath of the Bible, that is mentioned as the northern boundary of the Land of Israel, and was included in Solomon's Kingdom. It is situate on the steep banks above the River Orontes. The water-wheels by the river, 'as big as houses', make their constant music as they pump the water to the fields. The Arabs call the river the Rebel, because, as one of their writers has it, "other rivers water the lands without wheels, but the river of Hama waters them only by the aid of machines". The mountains between the Orontes and the Mediterranean are the dwellings of two Moslem sects which have jealously guarded their religious independence since the Middle Ages. One sect, called the Assassins, were pledged to carry out any order given by their Chieftain, the Old Man of the Mountains. The order was frequently to kill some enemy, and so their name was used for a murderer. But it is derived from the drug Hashish—something like Opium—which these devotees took to stupefy them before their dreadful deeds. They maintained their independence against both Crusaders and Saracens; and their descendants in modern times, the Ismailis, inhabit the old mountain fastnesses. They belong to the Moslem sect established also in India and East Africa, who venerate the Aga Khan of India. They know him as Mohamed Shah; and his picture hangs in every house.

The other sect are known as the Mutawallis, meaning the followers of Ali, the son-in-law of Mohamed, who was worsted and slain in the struggle for the succession to the Prophet. That sect has been for centuries powerful and dominant in Persia, where it is known as the Shia (meaning Sect). During the French Mandatory rule they enjoyed a special régime, it being the French policy to favour both Christian and Moslem minorities. But in the sovereign Arab States the tendency is to merge all the peoples and the sects.

North of Hama is Aleppo, after Damascus the most important city of Syria. It rises on a lofty plateau, and its citadel, built on a peak by the son of Saladin, towers splendidly

above the city. Its Arabic name, Haleb, means milk; and the place is associated with the Patriarch Abraham who, as the tradition goes, coming there from Mesopotamia, pastured his herds and gave milk to the thirsty. It has been for ages a great emporium of trade between the Near, the Middle and the Far East. Its situation, close to the Euphrates on the east and easily accessible from the Mediterranean on the west, and at a junction of the caravan routes across Asia, has given it this character. It was the main seat of the English Levant Company founded in the days of Queen Elizabeth. The Company appointed a Consul at Aleppo who was in charge, also, of the commerce of "Damascus, Amman, Tripoli, and all other parts in the Provinces of Syria, Jerusalem, Palestine and Jurie": (i.e. Judea). Shakespeare makes Othello go to Aleppo.

The port for Aleppo, in those days, was called Scanderoon, from the Arabic form of Alexander the Great, later was Alexandretta and is now Iscanderoon again. The bazaars of Aleppo have preserved unspoiled their Eastern character. They have not been 'Manchesterized', nor have they been vulgarized by trams and galvanized iron like the bazaars of Damascus. Through the ages the city had kept a large Jewish community. But in recent years the great part of the Aleppo Jews have moved to the Land of Israel, as have indeed all the Jewish communities of the Syrian towns.

The former Alexandretta is no longer in Syria, but is a part of the Ottoman State. It was in 1939, a few months before the outbreak of the Second World War, that France, then the Mandatory Power for Syria, agreed to transfer to the Turks the region of Antioch and Alexandretta, which had a majority of Turkish-speaking inhabitants. The Ottoman Government had long pressed for the re-attachment of the area that was not fundamentally Arab, and had historic memories for the Turks. The whole region is called by them Hatay, and is historically the country of the Hittites who were, in antiquity, one of the imperial peoples of the Middle East. The chief town of the region, and in the days of the Hellenistic, the Roman and the Byzantine Empires one of the great cities of the world, is Antioch. It lies to the north-west of Aleppo on a mountain-side that rises steeply from the River Orontes. It was the third city of the Roman Empire, next to Rome and Alexandria, and known as the Golden or the Beautiful. One of its glories was a four-mile street of marble pillars.



It takes its name from the Greek General Antiochus, one of the successors of Alexander the Great, who, at the end of the fourth century B.C., founded the Seleucid, or Syrian Empire. It has fallen sadly from its high estate, but still keeps relics of its former glory. Its walls date from the Middle Ages, when Antioch was again a great fortress and stronghold in the struggle between the Cross and the Crescent. One of the Patriarchs of the Eastern Christian Church, which was the State religion first of the Byzantine, and then of the Russian Empire, has his seat at Antioch. In the earliest days of the Christian sect, Antioch was the principal centre of the Mission. Here came Paul and Barnabas to preach the Christian doctrine to the Gentiles (Acts xi, 19-26), and it was here that the Christian congregation was first separated from the Jews and took the name of Christians. In those early centuries of the Christian era the Jewish community numbered between 50,000 and 100,000, and it enjoyed a large autonomy. Multitudes of the Greeks were attracted to the synagogue and were 'proselytes of righteousness'. It was at Antioch that the Christian Roman emperors began to persecute the Jews so that their lives should be wretched.

Sir Leonard Woolley, the former companion of T. E. Lawrence, digging Tells near Antioch, disclosed the remains of Hittite and pre-Hittite civilizations of the second millennium before the Christian era. In the thirteenth century the war-like Hittites, coming from Central Asia, and attempting to conquer Syria, were defeated by the Egyptian Pharaoh Thothmes at Kadesh near Aleppo, and their advance was stayed. Today the Turks regard the Hittites as their ancestors, because they too came from Central Asia. Sir Leonard's expedition discovered also a mass of pottery vessels which strikingly resemble the pottery of Crete and of Mycenae in Greece. Already in the sixteenth and fifteenth century the close links of Western Asia and Southern Europe were manifest. Thanks to the exploits of the archaeologists, the peoples of the Middle East in our day have become more conscious of their storied past and their relations with each other. And archaeology is not only a study for the scholars but a recreation of the people.

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